The social life of a small ethnology museum in Limpopo, South Africa

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Declaration

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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Abstract

This mini-ethnography is concerned with a small-town ethnology museum, the Aranya Museum, and the various actors that entered and engaged with the museum and its artefacts during a period of transition, which started with the death of its long-time curator. The museum, like many others in South Africa, was founded by a lone man and was animated by a colonial collecting ethic that had become deeply unfashionable post-apartheid. Indeed, the literature shows a radical shift in museum collecting practices that has seen "source communities" becoming involved in and laying claim to their ethnic heritage in such ethnology collections. Contrary to this trend, the Aranya Museum held little interest for the museum's "source communities" who expressed no intention to appropriate or reclaim 'their' indigenous artefacts. Instead, local white, wealthy and landed businessmen became publicly invested in this seemingly inconsequential museum precisely because it contained artefacts of the area's black communities; artefacts which were, at the time of my research, susceptible to appropriation. In the context of looming land claims and racial tensions in this small town, this appropriation was in opposition to the interests of people whose ethnic identity and heritage were contained in the museum. Inspired by Appadurai's (1986) *The Social Life of Things*, I show how this literally and symbolically set the collection and its personnel in motion. At the same time, the "source community's" dynamic understanding of heritage and of tourism has given rise to plans for possible new ethnology museums in the area, mapping onto existing political and economic divisions within the community.

Opsomming

Hierdie mini-etnografie is gesituasioneer in ‘n klein dorpie waar verskeie sosiale akteurs betrokke geraak het in ‘n etnologie museum, die Aranya Museum, gedurende ‘n oorgangsperiode wat begin het toe die museum se langtermyn kurator oorlede is. Soos baie ander museums in Suid Afrika, is dié een geloods deur ‘n man wat geïnspireer was deur ‘n koloniale versamelingsetiek. Ná apartheid het die etiek hoogs problematies geword. Inderdaad, akademiese werk dui op ‘n radikale verskuiwing in museumsversamelingspraktyke waarin “oorsprongsgemeenskappe” toenemend betrokke raak in etnologie museums en waar hulle dikwels eise instel op ‘hulle’ etniese erfenis in sulke versamelings. In teenstryd met dié neiging het die Aranya Museum se “oorsprongsgemeenskap” min belangstelling getoon in ‘hulle’ kultuurerfenis binne die museum. ‘n Groep plaaslike, ryk wit mans het wel probeer om die niksseggende versameling te probeer kaap omdat dit die plaaslike swart gemeenskappe se kultuurerfenis bevat het. Die objekte het gedurende my navorsing beskikbaar vir sulke kaping geword. In ‘n konteks waarin grondeise en rassespanning in die klein dorpie hoog geloop het, was die kaping in teenstryd met die belange van die mense wie se etniese identiteit en erfenis in die museum vervat is. Geïnspireer deur Appadurai (1986) se *The Social Life of Things*, wys ek hoe die proses letterlik en figuurlik die museum se versameling en personeel in mosie gesit het. Terselftertyd het die “oorsprongsgemeenskap” se dinamiese begrip van erfenis en toerisme meegegee dat hulle planne gemaak het om nuwe etnologie museums in die area oop te maak. Die planne was geskool op bestaande politieke en ekonomiese verdelings in die gemeenskap.

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List of Abbreviations

CCMA	Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration
EEF	Economic Freedom Fighters
GAM	Greater Aranya Municipality
LSWP	Legacy of Slavery Working Party
SAHRA	South African Heritage Resources Agency
SAM	South African Museum

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This research project is about a small-town museum in the tropical environs of a town I will call Aranya in the Mopani District, Limpopo, South Africa (see Figure 1). I was first attracted to this small town because of the legend of South Africa's Rain Queen who lives nearby. Known as Modjadji, the rain queen has been described as the "[t]ransformer of the clouds… regarded as the changer of the seasons" (Krige & Krige 1943: 271). The queen's mystical abilities seemed well suited to this area. Aranya is an agricultural town surrounded by forests and fruit and vegetable farms in almost every direction. The area receives high rainfall and its soils are fertile, yet these natural riches did not extend to Aranya's population. Unemployment, low education levels and poverty plagued more than half of the town's people, the majority of whom were black (Whitbread, MacLeod, McDonald, Penegelly, Ayisi & Mkhari 2011: 435). Apart from the economic and educational legacies of apartheid, the area's social issues included increased racial tensions, which some sections of the community have ascribed to land claims in the area[1], which have received great public attention (Whitbread et al 2001: 439).

[1] In 1994, South Africa land reform policy experienced major changes impacting the Restitution and Land Rights Act (No 22 of 1994) and Section 2(7) of the Bill of Rights. It determined that any person or community dispossessed of property rights, after June 1913 and as a result of racially discriminatory laws or practices, is entitled to restitution of that property or equitable redress (De Beer 2006: 27). Initially, the cut-off date for lodging land claims was December 1998, yet in June 2014, the process of lodging land claims was reopened and extended until 30 June 2019 (Zenker 2015: 2), yet only 7% of white-opened farms have been transferred to black farmers as a result of the land reform programmes (Evers, Seagle and Krijtenburg, 2013:103).

Figure 1: Map of South Africa, Limpopo Province and Modjadjiskloof. Source: Wikipedia (05/02/2020)

Modjadjiskloof, the kingdom of the Modjadji Rain Queens

According to the newspapers, it rained slightly on the morning of 16 April 2003, the day Makobo Modjadji was inaugurated as the new Rain Queen Modjadji VI of the Balobedu. It apparently drizzled through most of the ceremony. A family representative, Mathole Moshekga, said that they expected the rain; no one doubted that the coronation of the rain queen would be a dry event (Nair, 2003b). The rainfall on her coronation day was interpreted as a symbol of her power, and a blessing on her and her people. Although the family knew that "rain will be a blessing for the queen", an auspicious sign, Moshekga said that it would "disrupt proceedings" (Nair, 2003a). In June 2005, two years after her coronation, Maboko Modjadji VI died (Munnion, 2005). The untimely death of the queen and the fact that her daughter was still a baby, meant that it would be 13 years before the Balobedu people could witness the coronation of their next rain queen.

On 7 April 2018, the Balobedu held a ceremony to celebrate the coronation of Maboko Modjadji VI's daughter, Masalanabo Modjadji, then aged 13, as the new rain queen. Spectators remarked that the rainfall on the day confirmed her appointment as the new rain queen. Moshekga, now the guardian of the young queen elect, said "there was no better confirmation of the new dawn than witnessing the rainfall" (Ramothwala, 2018). For her part, the new rain queen attributed the rainfall to the performance by a group of Balobedu women singing rain-making songs at the stadium; songs that the Balobedu people considered as the highest appeal to God and their ancestors (Ramothwala, 2018).

'The Balobedu' and the Modjadji queen have a legendary place in the anthropological record. The Modjadji queen was the subject of a famous anthropological work in the early 1940s by Eileen Jensen Krige and Jack Krige called *The Realm of the Rain-Queen*. In that work, they described the Balobedu as a Sotho-Venda group located in the "sheltering foothills of the Drakensberg" (Krige & Krige 1943: 1), now called Modjadjiskloof, in the Mopani

District. The Kriges (1943: 2) emphasised the uniqueness of the Balobedu in Southern Africa; this "tribe" had been ruled by a female monarch, Modjadji, the Rain Queen, since the start of the 1800s. The Modjadji Queen reigned over 150 rural settlements that lay within her territory. According to Krige and Krige (1943: 272), the Balobedu had "no stronger belief" than their belief in the power of the queen's rainmaking abilities and her control over nature to ensure a good season (Krige & Krige, 1943: 271).

Almost 70 years after the Kriges wrote about the rain queen, Joubert (2012: 7) described a ritual system for the Balobedu that seemed unchanged. He claimed that the queen had at her disposal sacred rainmaking objects like rain beads, a rain horn holding rain medicine, and rain pots containing holy water (Joubert, 2012: 7). And like the Kriges asserted, these objects were said to be a matter of great secrecy. Certain things could, however, make rain charms ineffective or weak, and in turn stop the rain unless certain measures were put into effect (Krige & Krige, 1943: 273). The queen could only control the rain if she was in agreement with her ancestors who were able to grant her appeals for rain or a lack thereof (Krige & Krige, 1943: 275). Joubert (2011: 14) seemed to suggest that the queen was still considered among the Balobedu as a mediator between her people and their ancestors. In 2010, Dr Motshekga, the young queen's guardian and legal advisor to the royal council, published another book on the cosmology of Modjadji dynasty and their traces to Northern Africa. In his book, he provided an insider perspective into the origins of the Balobedu kingdom and also their rebirth in the new democratic South Africa (Motshekga 2010: 131, 179). He confirmed that his people believed that the reigning Modjadji Queen possesses mystical rainmaking abilities, abilities she inherited through her matriarchal line (Motshekga 2010:178). Although inherited, these abilities only come to fruition after the rain queen completes years of training in the traditions and customs of the royal household (Prinsloo 2005: 819).

The Balobedu traditional authority, led by the Modjadji Dynasty, is one of the many traditional authorities that have not only survived, but thrived in a democratic South Africa (Motshekga 2010: 179). The birth of a democratic South Africa opened many possibilities for the Modjadji Dynasty. In 1997, the Modjadji Dynasty made claims to the Ralushai Commission, a body tasked with investigating witchcraft-related violence (Ralushai 2001:149) as well as traditional leadership disputes and claims. The Dynasty also made claims to former president Nelson Mandela, with regards to the restoration of the Modjadji Dynasty under Her Majesty, Queen Modjadji (Motshekga, 2010: 180). Prompted by recommendations from the Commission on Traditional Leadership Disputes and Claims (the Tolo Commission),

established in 2011 with a mandate of restoring the dignity of traditional leaders (Anon 2011), former president Jacob Zuma announced the official recognition of the Modjadji Dynasty in 2016 (Ramothwala, 2018). Zuma downplayed his role in the recognition of the Balobedu queenship status and credited President Cyril Ramaphosa with the role he played in the process that recognised the Balobedu queenship. One of Ramaphosa's first interactions with traditional authorities since he became president was his appearance and speech at the inauguration of Masanalabo Modjadji, and prior to that, his announcement of her official recognition as queen rather than as a chieftainness (Anon 2018a).

A number of commentators welcomed the news that the Modjadji Dynasty would be recognised as a kingdom rather than as a chieftaincy because it represented an alternative to the (toxic) patriarchal character most often associated with traditional authorities in South Africa (Du Toit 2004: 92). The state's elevation of the Modjadji Dynasty's traditional authority status came at a time of heightened interest in the authority in local and national mass media news outlets. Media outlets were especially interested in the workings of the Balobedu in April 2003 (Carroll 2003), with the coronation of Makobo Modjadji VI (Sefara 2003), her death in June 2005 (Hlatswayo 2005; Khangale 2005; Wines 2005), President Zuma's first announcement about the recognition of the Bolebedu throne in 2016 (Nkosi 2016), the April 2018 official recognition of the queenship status of the Modjadji Dynasty (Ramothwala 2018), and the coronation of Masalanabo Modjadji elect (Anon 2003). The Modjadji royal family also featured in local news publications for a growing internal dispute with another royal Balobedu family, the Mokoto family. In 2015, the Mokoto family accused the Modjadji royal family of "snatch[ing] the dynasty" from them and that Masalanabo Modjadji elect was not the rightful heir to the throne (Matala 2015). The feud dragged on into 2018 when a spokesman for the Modjadji family, Phetole Mampeule, publicly declared that the Mokoto family's accusation was baseless (Matala 2018).

The Balobedu's continuous presence in the national media has attracted a lot of attention to the social and political structure of the new kingdom. But it also attracted social commentary and speculation about the queen's mystical rainmaking abilities (Carroll 2003). Commentators were especially interested in the controversy surrounding the death of Modjadji VI, the coronation of her daughter, Masalanabo Modjadji elect, and the future of the Modjadji Dynasty in light of internal political disputes, especially at a time when climate change and droughts played an increasing important role in public debate.

Recent years saw the Balobedu using this distinctiveness, of a queen as the head of the traditional authority and one who has special powers, to promote their distinct identity and culture in South Africa (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2012: 9-11). Central to this identity-making was the ability of their queen to make or withhold the rain and the local knowledge of sacred traditional rain dances. In a context of economic marginality, the Comaroffs (2012: 9) explained, the Balobedu transformed their cultural capital, consisting of traditional objects and practices, into a commodity to be promoted and sold in various tourism ventures. The Modjadji family's tourism ventures capitalised on, advertised and promoted the renowned rainmaking abilities of the Modjadji queen. Ivanovic (2015: 45), in his research on tourism activities in three Balobedu villages, found that the Modjadji family were the sole financial benefactors of such activities and other tourism ventures involving the "Modjadji brand".

My fieldwork

Considering the relatively recent public attention bestowed on the Modjadji Dynasty by president Ramaphosa and other prominent actors in South Africa, and also the extent to which the queen's supposed rainmaking abilities featured in local and national news outlets, I initially intended to explore the meaning and significance that the Balobedu people attached to the queen's reputed rainmaking abilities. I planned to investigate how people residing in the territory of the Modjadji Queen, perceived, constructed, related to, and made sense of her reputed rainmaking abilities. I intended to participate in guided tours that took place at the Modjadji royal compound to determine how the queen's rainmaking abilities, and other aspects of their cultural capital were sold and explained to outsiders and members of an international public. I hoped that the tours would allow me access to the local tour guide and possibly the local Balobedu people.

The drive from Cape Town to Modjadjiskloof is 1820kms, a distance that I could not handle on my own. My father generously agreed to help with the drive and to introduce me to people he knew who lived in Aranya. We arrived in Aranya on the eve of the 30 November 2018 and stayed with my father's work colleagues in a well-established upper-middle class area. I noticed that the town itself was made up of an affluent, mainly residential area, where we were staying, the much busier town center, and behind the shopping centers and taxi rank, an industrial area. In many respects, the town still bore the scars of apartheid's spatial legacy

with black people relegated to poorly serviced 'townships' far from the town's commercial and transport hubs.

Aside from the various restaurants, lodges and smaller hotels scattered between the residential area and town center, many of Aranya's known tourist attractions were found on the town's border and surrounding regions. The roads out of the town were lined with various nature reserves, garden routes, nurseries and craft shops, two animal theme parks, different types of adventure tourism such as canopy tours and birdwatching, as well as numerous upscale spas, hotels and lodges. Not content with staying with his friends, my father insisted on helping me gather tourist brochures from the town's hotels, lodges and bed and breakfasts. I wanted to get a sense of the 'tourism landscape' and how the Modjadji queen featured in it. Among the pile of brochures we gathered, a few advertised cultural and townships tours and related activities for tourists interested in visiting the black townships on the outskirts of the town. The Modjadji tours did not feature in the pile. I found the tours advertised online by *Q&M Tours*, a local tourism company.

At the time of my fieldwork, I was 24 years old and identified as coloured, which seemed an incidental part of my make-up. Raised in a post-apartheid context where I attended schools and a university that saw a relatively easy mixing of people from all kinds of racial groups, I was not prepared for the social importance of race in this town. I was powerfully confronted with the town's radical racial divisions when one of the museum guides argumentatively insisted that I was white when she saw a photograph of my mother and had already met my father. Regardless of my strong resistance to the idea, she found it hard to believe that my family and I were not white. I was powerfully struck by the idea that I presented as white to one half of the town. Perplexed, I returned home to my hosts, whom I knew to be coloured as well, with a question about this. They laughed at the fact that I "noticed" and let me in on an "inside joke", commenting that they were two of the eight coloured people in Aranya- and that they often "passed" as white. In subsequent encounters with people in the field, I was often surprised by the weight that they attached to my supposed "white" identity. At the time, I was uncomfortable with this insistence from others and did not envision the extent to which race played a role in political, social and cultural relationships in the town.

Cultural products of the Modjadji and their place in the Aranya Museum

Seeing a likely tour online before my arrival, I booked my first tour of the Modjadji royal compound for 1 December 2018. It did not get off to a good start. The tourism broker who would introduce me to the Modjadji tour guide, died between concluding the contract and my arrival in the field. Her husband, Mr. Garret, whose background was in nature conversation, assumed her tourism duties and became the coordinator of my Modjadji tours. He admitted that he "was only her driver" and did not know the people or places associated with the various tourism ventures she had established. Mr. Garret nevertheless arranged two tours with the Modjadji tour guide. The first tour was cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances on the part of the Balobedu tour guide (see Chapter 5). The second tour, which took place on 3 December, afforded me little access to local people living in the royal compound. On the contrary, I did not encounter any local people on the tour through the royal village, aside from members of the tour guide's family and a few men drinking beers under a tree outside *Modjadji Tavern*. Despite meeting the guide's family, who seemed rather unresponsive, and the men drinking beer after beer outside the tavern, none of them wanted to participate in my research.

At the Modjadji royal compound, I made video-recordings of the tour and took photographs with the permission of the Balobedu guide who assented to my research on his tour. I planned to do a detailed content analysis of these tours based on the video recordings. Although I could take photos of a host of objects and empty places, and recorded the guide's narrative, this was a lonely tour; no other tourists, aside from my father, had joined us on it while the royal compound was deserted. Aside from the pleasantries exchanged on my encounters during the tours, I found few other means of gaining access to people of Modjadjiskloof. There were also no other tourists on either day of my scheduled tours, which meant that I could not study their responses to the packaging of the Modjadji "brand".

While in Aranya, our hosts put me in contact with a journalist, Mr. Johannes, who worked for a local newspaper. Hearing about my research project, he made arrangements for me to get in touch with "Prince Modjadji", a grandson of Queen Modjadji IV. Mr. Johannes said he knew and had interviewed the prince a few years before they became properly acquainted. Unfortunately, his calls and my messages did not reach the prince. A few days later, Mr. Johannes informed me that Prince Modjadji had passed away and that he was still gathering information before he published the story. He could not confirm the cause of death.

Due to the various mishaps and problems with access I encountered with regards to my original research topic, I was slowly opening up to the possibility of changing my approach to

research in the Balobedu community. On 4 December, with no scheduled interviews or other plans, I decided to visit the town's museum, as I usually do with my spare time in a new place. I had never seen a museum so full of artefacts and because these were all of African origin, some of it possibly connected to the Balobedu, I thought it would be best for me to record the guided tour I was taken on, and take as many photographs as I could. The museum was stacked with everyday items of various African cultures and people. The guide said that the artefacts were all collected in South Africa as well as a few from other African countries. Walking into the last room of the museum, the tour guide directed my attention to artefacts that once belonged to Queen Modjadji IV. I was immediately intrigued. How did the museum obtain artefacts of one of the region's most prominent figures? Earlier in the guided tour, I was told that the museum artefacts were representative of the area's different "cultures", "50% Tsonga and 50% Sotho". When I asked the guide if the Modjadji artefacts were part of the museum's display because they were also one of the "cultures" in the area, she replied, "No, in fact Rain Queen IV, she was close to the owner of this museum. That is why we have all her stuff here". The museum owner was nowhere in sight and the guide told me that he only occasionally came into the museum.

The tour of the Aranya Museum solidified my ideas about changing the direction of my research project. My mind was racing with questions about this small, makeshift museum and its elusive curator. The museum, as I saw it, stood in sharp contrast to my preconceived notions and experiences of museums in South Africa and abroad; it was haphazard, over-stocked and few items had any descriptions attached to them. It looked more like a hoarder's store room than a curated museum. How did one man compile such a vast collection of African artefacts? Why did he only collect artefacts from African "cultures"? What "close" relationship did he have with Queen Modjadji IV that led to his possession of her belongings? The Modjadji artefacts in particular piqued my interest, especially because it resonated with my original research topic. Here was the Modjadji "culture" packaged and displayed for tourist consumption. I wondered what (little) value the Modjadji artefacts had when they were given to Mr. Gerhard; I wondered what value Mr. Gerhard attached to them when he displayed them as part of his most prized collection in the museum. Did the value of the artefacts stem from their biographical connection to Queen Modjadji IV- or the personal value that Mr. Gerhard attributed to them because of his "close" relationship to the queen and his possession of what he perceived as sacred objects?

Upon reflection, I realised that this was a much more viable project given my limited resources and the time I had available for fieldwork. The project was still concerned with cultural capital, yet instead of investigating how cultural capital was mobilised within an ethnically defined community, I became interested in this ethnic museum and the cultural capital it held for its relevant stakeholders. My initial field trip, to get a sense of the lay of the land, lasted six days. My father and I returned to Cape Town on 5 December 2018.

I was again confronted with the challenge of gaining access to potential participants while I planned my second trip to Aranya. The tour guide had given me the museum owner's cellphone number. So, in preparation for my return to the town, I called Mr. Gerhard to ask if he would be willing to be a participant in my research. I wanted to focus on his work as collector and curator, and on the Aranya Museum's collection more broadly. He agreed. Yet two weeks before my second scheduled trip, after struggling to get hold of Mr. Gerhard, I found out that he had passed away in January 2019. I had contacted the municipality, under whose jurisdiction the museum fell, and an official there informed me of the news. The museum remained open and I decided to continue my research there. The museum guide that I had met on my first trip was still employed by the museum. When I contacted her to make arrangements for my visit, she gave me Mr. Gerhard's wife's contact details. Mrs. Schneider, an elderly, soft-spoken woman, informed me that she was not involved in the museum's management structures yet saw no problem with the direction of my research. She directed me back to the museum guide as the "best person" to assist me in my research on the museum.

When I returned to the museum on 11 February 2019, I immediately noticed that the museum was a little different from the last time I visited it. The museum guide who was there on my previous visit was now joined by another, younger woman while the displays were more ordered, and the whole seemed less crowded. In the first week that I spent at the museum, I also noticed that a number of wealthy local white men had taken an interest in the museum's management and future and that Queen Modjadji IV's artefacts stood central in these plans. It was obvious that I had entered the museum during a period when drastic change and transformation were taking place. I saw an opportunity to study this museum in what appeared to be a transitional phase and spent two weeks observing the maneuvers of these new actors and how the museum staff reacted to it. I wondered what brought them to the museum so quickly after Mr. Gerhard's passing. What did their time and energy in the museum eventually afford them? How did these changes affect the values of the artefacts in the museum?

I also decided to return to the Balobedu tour guide and family members of the deceased Prince Modjadji, to ascertain how they positioned themselves, as one of the museum's "source communities" (Peers & Brown 2003: 2), in relation to the museum, but more specifically in relation to the Modjadji artefacts it contained.

My research took on an exploratory format, involving one central location, the museum. I was interested in the ways that people from different socio-economic and professional positions who had a vested interest in the museum, viewed the museum and what impact this had on the meanings they imposed on the artefacts it held. I was also interested in visitors to the museum and any other key figures who repeatedly entered the museum. I wanted to learn how people appropriated and assigned meaning to these artefacts and how these meanings were molded to suit the needs and challenges of each person's respective socio-political and economic circumstances. I was also interested in the interpersonal dynamics between museum staff.

In this thesis, I engaged with a body of literature on museums in South Africa that started with the premise that all museums were inherently colonial, and any kind of collecting or collection was a colonial enterprise. This literature was powerfully shaped by the influential work that had been done on the collection of human remains in the late 1990s. In this tradition, scholars such as Legassick and Rassool (2000), Skotnes (1996) and Schramm (2016), like many others, problematised modern museums in terms of the history of their collections and collecting practices, the fact that many had acquired human remains unethically and that these problematic collections and remains occupied, until very recently, space in national museums. In this literature, the "source communities" of these problematic collections often come to the fore as marginalised communities who want a say in museum displays and who want to restore the dignity of ancestors who had been physically and symbolically brutalised by colonialism (and in South Africa, by apartheid). Post-apartheid, a number of authors have tied the transformation of existing museums and the creation of new ones to political and symbolic liberation from such brutal pasts.

The literature on museums in South Africa, however, treat colonialism as a singular event or phenomenon. It does not acknowledge the historical or anthropological insight that colonialism was never monolithic. For instance, according to Comaroff (1993: 168-169; 187), colonialism was always heterogeneous, with different modes of colonialism (like state colonialism, settler colonialism and civilizing colonialism) manifesting in different forms,

having different origins, motivations and goals, and different actors who were informed by their histories and affected how they related to one another.

My arrival at this small-town ethnographic museum, in the middle of nowhere and on the margins of empire, elucidated the poor fit of the existing literature on South African museums to this place. What I encountered here was not state colonialism, civilizing or settler colonialism but a history altogether smaller; a museum started by a single man who collected things that he bought on a whim and who ranked his collection based on a personal connection to a local mystical queen. His collection 'instincts' however stemmed from a wider context within which colonial tropes were embedded. In this ethnography, I show that the notion of a single or monolithic colonialism, falls apart when applied to the small-town ethnographic museum my research is concerned with. But beyond the question of colonialism and its supposed formative role in museum collections, this thesis also looks at the dynamic ways in which this seemingly insignificant museum embodied shifting modes of power and knowledge as it transformed in the face of the death of its curator. I show that museum collections can become, as Appadurai (1986) said of other material objects, things with dynamic social histories. To this end, I examine the relationships between various prominent local actors and the town museum to bring to light the motives and values of the different actors associated with the museum's artefacts after Mr. Gerhard's death, however different they may be.

On my first two days at the museum, I conducted formal interviews with the two museum guides on their work duties in the museum and their perception of the value and significance of museum's artefacts. This seemed necessary to solidify my position as a researcher in the museum; both women expected a researcher to have an interview list and formal questions. After this, once the women accepted my presence in the museum, I had many informal conversations with them. I made copious notes of these conversations and my observations in the museum. Also on my second day at the museum, I had a formal interview with a museum trustee regarding his role in the museum; I had the distinct impression that this interview was to determine my research agenda and to anticipate any political consequences of my involvement in the museum (see Chapter 3). After these formal interviews, the museum workers allowed me to just hang out in the museum. I made notes about the daily movements of the museum staff, of museum tours, visitors and the treatment of artefacts. Where I was permitted, I also made video-recordings of settings and conversations but for the most part, my research could be described as a "mini-ethnography" (Fusch et al 2017: 923). In the tradition of ethnographic fieldwork, I also kept a reflexive journal of my personal feelings and

impressions in the field to help me situate my observations as observations made from a specifically situated body (Fusch et al 2017:292).

During this time, I also had a set of interviews with members of the Modjadji source community about the Modjadji artefacts and ethnic tourism more broadly. I interviewed the Modjadji tour guide twice over the course of my two research trips and had a single in-depth interview with members of the Modjadji family. In these interviews, I used photos I had taken in the museum to elicit comments, memories and conversation (cf. Bryman 2012: 480; see Chapter 5). In talking to the "source community", I also had a follow-up interview with the guide who had led our first tour of the Modjadji compound. I used the same photos of the Modjadji artefacts to elicit responses from him.

When I left the museum on 20 March 2019, I could not afford to go back to Aranya again but continued my research on the museum and the actors involved in it through cellphone contacts, the internet, and online newspaper sites. One of the people I contacted after I left Aranya was a wealthy local white man whom I had met at the museum. We had an unstructured interview while I was there and he had invited me to ask him more questions once we were both back in Cape Town (see Chapter 4). We met each other again on 2 April 2019 in Cape Town for a long conversation about the museum and his planned future for it. In our conversation, he mentioned that his sister had written a fictional work about his family's history in the area. Since he admitted that the work was semi-autobiographical and reflected his family's history, I used it as an important source to analyse the family's political situatedness in Aranya (see Chapter 4). After my return to Cape Town, I also kept in contact with the Modjadji tour guide via email, and he responded very generously to many follow-up questions I had regarding the tours he conducted. I also kept in contact with a local journalist as he had access to news articles I could not read online and could give me much background to local feuds, families and dynamics. We maintained contact through messages and phone calls for almost a month after my return. Aside from the suggested articles from the local journalist, I spent much time scouring online newspaper archives for any mention of Mr. Gerhard, the Aranya Museum and the Modjadji family. I also conducted archival research on the agricultural company, Agri24 and the town in general.

In the end, this project encompassed a range of sources and types of information; my ethnographic field notes, the video recordings of the tours, photos of the royal compound and artefacts in the museum, formal and informal interviews with people connected to the museum,

archival records from both the museum itself and from newspapers, as well as digital sources. It also included a book written by the rich local man's sister about his family and their historical connection to the land- and its people. At times, this was an unwieldy amount of information but I analysed it by coding it for themes, by identifying recurring themes and then arranging it according to these themes (Attride-Sterling 2001: 389). I also identified themes by cross-referencing participants' interview responses for repetitions and metaphors, differences and similarities (Bryman 2012: 580). As an example, the relationship between museums and source communities was a recurring discussion in the field, and to a lesser degree, the idea of authenticity of the museum's artefacts.

Ethical considerations

In terms of research ethics, I adhered to Anthropology Southern Africa (ASNA)'s guidelines. As such, I ensured that my participants were well informed of the purpose of my research and my role as a researcher. Before each interview, I explained my motivation for the interview and what information I hoped to gain from interviewing each participant. I asked that participants consent to being interviewed, and in cases where multiple interviews were conducted, as in the cases of the two museum guides, I asked that they sign a consent form (ASNA 2005: 142). I obtained verbal permission prior to recording interviews and discussions, and also prior to taking photographs while in the field. I took photographs of objects, artefacts and buildings in the Aranya Museum and the Modjadji royal compound, I also made sure to refrain from taking photographs of participants' faces and recognisable public places in order to ensure anonymity (AAA 1998: 3). Participants were made aware that they could withdraw from participation, refuse to answer questions, request recordings be turned off, and also request the exclusion of answers and conversations from the writing process (ASNA 2005: 142). Many participants were well-known in their respective local contexts, and because confidentiality and anonymity were part of the conditions of their participation, I provided the town, the museum and private companies, and all my participants with pseudonyms (ASNA 2005: 142). I did however face some difficulties in anonymising all my participants as a portion of my research dealt with published literatures, including the fictional work of a participant's sister and scholarly articles on the farming conglomerate, Argi24.

Chapter outline

This research project is concerned with a single, small-town 'ethnic' museum and the various actors that entered and engaged with the museum and its artefacts during a period of transition which started with the death of its curator. As a description of a specific period, the thesis is organised to reflect the historical trajectory of this process.

In the first chapter, I will deal with the historical establishment of the museum, of Mr. Gerhard's legacy and how he performed his duties as collector and curator of the museum. By looking at Mr. Gerhard's practice of collecting and curating, I will argue that his practice resonates with that of the colonial collector and is also informed in his relationship with his employees and the museum's source communities. In the following chapters, I explore the relationships and objects contained in the museum and illustrate how they were 'set in motion' by Mr. Gerhard's death. The second chapter therefore unpacks the changes evident in the museum after Mr. Gerhard's death. In particular, I will focus on the relationships inside the museum and how the entry of another museum guide and new management impacted on Mr. Gerhard's longtime employee and conversations about the collection's future. In this chapter, I also explore how established economic interests in the town and racial tensions over land claims mapped onto the new management of the museum and plans for its future. The third chapter explores a wealthy local's professional entry into the museum and the implications of his vision for a new museum on alternative premises. In this chapter, I show the attempt of a local wealthy family to engage in the process of "distinction", whereby attractions based on "high culture" (Bourdieu 1986:34) are used as a means for social and economic elevation in relation to similar family farms in the area. The fourth chapter deals with members of one of the museum's source communities and their opinion of the Modjadji collection displayed in the Aranya Museum. In this chapter, I argue that the stance taken by source community members, with regards to the Aranya Museum and the Modjadji collection, was also a response to, and critique of the tourism ventures of the Modjadji tribal authority. I will also show how local contexts, defined by internal political disputes, impact on source community opinions of the museum and its artefacts.

In the concluding chapter, I relate the findings of my research to wider debates about the use of cultural capital and heritage. I argue that this is not limited to marginalised groups, as the literature suggests, but that powerful actors also employ and appropriate "Ethnicity Inc." (Comaroff & Comaroff 2009), not in terms of their own ethnic identities but in terms of those "others" that threaten their interests. As such, controlling ethnic museums such as the one in this town, offered powerful white businesses and interests one way to negotiate the tense

racialised processes of post-apartheid South Africa. It is this potential that has turned a museum that would otherwise have remained ignored and overlooked into a powerful "asset", a cultural symbol of belonging or a dead archive, depending on whose position one understands this from. Yet, source community members remain outside the process through which their cultural capital is being appropriated by the various actors. Their disinterest in the museum and the Modjadji collection opposes much of what literature had thus far stated about source communities, as important actors in the process of appropriation, and their perspectives towards museums who hold artefacts of material heritage and culture. In this case, source community members view the museum differently to the other actors who form part of this research. They do not view the museum, and the cultural capital it holds, as something they can appropriate for the purpose of asserting their ethnic identity. They therefore opted to establishing other means, external to the museum, of appropriating and capitalising on their cultural capital.

Chapter 2: One man's mission

Introduction

In December 2018, on the last day of my trip to Aranya, I decided to visit the Aranya Museum. I followed Google Maps' directions, but they only led me to the town library and the Greater Aranya Municipality (GAM). There were no signs to the museum and Google was no help. I walked around the municipal offices hoping to find the museum in or around the offices but was eventually forced to ask one of the security guards for directions. He indicated that the museum was around the corner, tucked away behind trees, a red fence and large delicious monster shrubs. The quaint little house had no signage on this side, the boards apparently faced a street and were affixed to the back of the museum. Through the fence, I saw colourful sculptures on the tiled verandah.

Figure 2: Museum signboard. Source: L Hendricks, date: 04/18/2018

A small gate in the fence was open and I walked up the paved walkway to the open door. Inside, two black women, one in her mid-twenties and another older, greeted me saying that they were the museum guides. I asked if they could take me on a tour of the museum, and whether I could record the tour and take photographs inside the museum. Miss Cynthia, the older museum guide, was uncertain, saying that it was not up to her to give me permission. She asked that I call Mr. Gerhard Schneider, the museum's curator, on his cell phone. Mr. Gerhard at first sounded disinterested and impatient, and wanted to know who I was and what my

purpose at the museum was. I informed him that I was a student researcher at Stellenbosch University. He took a while to think it over before giving me permission to record and take pictures of the tour. Once I told Miss Cynthia that Mr. Gerhard agreed that I could record the tour, she indicated that it was the younger guide, Miss Thandi's, turn to give the tour.

Figure 3: Reception area. Source L Hendricks, date: 04/12/2018

Figure 4: Sculptures room. Source: L Hendricks, date: 04/12/2018

Figure 5: Pots room. Source: L Hendricks, date: 04/12/2018

On the tour, I was struck by how full the museum seemed; artefacts were often stacked four deep, on top of cupboards, under display cabinets and hanging on every wall. Certain artefacts were on sale, from sculptures (R200-R1400) to wooden spoons (R40) and a miniature bow and arrow (R70) that stood on cupboards and in the display compartment of the reception desk. When I asked about the sculptures that stood out on the verandah, Miss Tandi said they were not for sale and that Mr. Gerhard commissioned the "Rikhotso figures" from an

internationally known local sculptor, Phillip Rikhotso, for the purpose of display at the museum. I was surprised to learn that these artefacts were all assembled by Mr. Gerhard - and belonged to him rather than to the municipality on whose grounds the museum stood. This small, parochial museum apparently came about due to the work of one enthusiastic collector and was shaped by his interests and hobbies rather than by the curatorial practices of the larger museum complexes of South Africa's metropoles. Whereas these metropolitan museums focussed on creating niche collections, on restoring 'authentic' artefacts and only collecting objects of high artistic or cultural merit, Mr. Gerhard adamantly collected endless variations of a seemingly random number of everyday objects from local and foreign African "cultures" in his museum. He had collections of pots, masks, headrests, beadwork, drums, sculptures and smaller figurines, cooking utensils and weaponry. And unlike the metropolitan museums, who were working with "source communities" to display their artefacts and articulate their histories and perspectives (Peers & Brown 2003:6), Mr. Gerhard intended to save and preserve African cultures through the artefacts that he collected, without working with his "source communities".

As the literature on museum curation has long held, museum collections are not neutral (Davison & Klinghardt 1997:184). They are informed by the professional authority of curators, but also by collecting practices, the relationship between the artefacts and their source communities, museum audiences, and wider curatorial practices (Davison & Klinghardt 1997:184; Peers & Brown 2003:25-27). Very little research has been done on unfashionable, failed (Witz 2010) and parochial museums such as Mr. Gerhard's Aranya museum. Little research has also been done on the ways that curating practices impact on the relationship between the collector/curator, museum staff and source communities. This chapter will address these issues with specific reference to the Aranya Museum. I will argue that Mr. Gerhard's collection and his perception of African cultures were informed by a colonial collector mind-set that also informed his relationship to the town's source communities and to his long-time assistant in the museum.

The founder

I never got to interview Mr. Gerhard in person; he passed away shortly after my first visit to Aranya. But as a well-known man in the town, various journalists had over the years interviewed him about his life and work. It was from their articles, and from interviews with

acquaintances and employees who knew him, that I could draw a partial picture of the man and his life.

Mr. Gerhard was born in 1931 in Charlottenburg near Berlin and in 1947 moved from there to Sweden where he met his wife, Mrs. Alina. In 1952, he travelled to South Africa for the first time to assist his uncle with a land claim dispute with the British government when they confiscation his tea plantation in Tanzania (Coetzee 2018; Ettmayr 2014). Apparently "in love with South Africa", Mr. Gerhard remained (Coetzee 2018). He worked on road constructions in Botswana before relocating to join a foreign trade business in Johannesburg (Anon 2019e). Mr. Gerhard's wife eventually joined him in 1957 and they were married in the Swedish Lutheran Church (Coetzee 2018). In 1960, he and his family moved to Aranya where he worked as a bookkeeper for several companies before starting his own accounting business. In 1969, Mr. Gerhard was employed part-time by the German Research Council and became the scientific assistant to Professor Otto Fraenzle in the field of archelogy, ethnology and early history (Anon 2014b; Anon 2019e). Mr. Gerhard was also co-founder of the Interdisciplinary Sahara Research Society and a member of the *Institutum Canarium*, concerned with the cultural heritage of the Canary Islands (Anon 2019e). He produced several publications for museums in Paris, France and the Linden Museum in Stuttgart, Germany (Anon 2014b). It was in the course of his research that Mr. Gerhard collected African art and artefacts. Mr. Gerhard stayed in Aranya with the intention of opening a museum of "rare bygone and current African treasures" (Coetzee 2018). In 1995 he opened the Aranya Museum. He worked as its curator until his death early in 2019 (Anon 2019e).

People who knew Mr. Gerhard described him as a broody man who was passionate about his collection and the museum. Mrs Schneider, who heard about my work at the museum, joked when she visited the museum that Mr. Gerhard "would have given me hell" if he was still alive. Miss Cynthia laughed knowingly. A newspaper article in Mr. Gerhard's file, published in 2011 in the Bulletin, admitted that he "can be difficult" when it came to his collection and wanting "to make it available to the people of Aranya" (Anon 2011b). To his friends, Mr. Gerhard only seemed stubborn and difficult because he had been unfairly dealt with by the municipality who did not support his passionate dedication to the preservation of African cultural artefacts; he often complained about their neglect of the museum building and of its project. Mr. Petrus, a prominent businessman in town (see Chapter 3), commented that Mr. Gerhard had "lived for" his collection.

Mr. Gerhard initially approached the Aranya Town Council in 1965 with plans to establish a cultural museum in Aranya; the Town Council did not approve his request (Coetzee 2018). In one of his monthly reports, stored at the museum, Mr. Gerhard wrote about this early phase in the Aranya museum's history saying that his initial collection held a "wonderful variety of local artefacts" (Schneider 2016) that he wished to use to establish a museum. In 1970, and "in urgent need of funds" (Schneider 2016), Mr. Gerhard sold much of his ethnological and archaeological collection to the Town Council for R7 000, at the time a large amount (Ettmayr 2014; Coetzee 2018). Mr. Gerhard wrote that he sold his collection to the Town Council with the understanding that he would be in charge of the envisaged museum (Schneider 2016). However, soon after the collection was purchased, the Town Council was restructured and the museum plans were put aside (Coetzee 2018).

Ettmayr (2014) reported that the Town Council sold Mr. Gerhard's collection to a private collector at the University of Potchefstroom without informing him. In the same monthly report, Mr. Gerhard wrote that he would never have agreed to the sale of such "irreplaceable items". Years later when the private collector wanted to sell the collection, it was worth R1.2 million. Mr. Gerhard could not afford to buy the collection back (Ettmayr 2014) and it was sold to collectors from "all over the world" (Anon 2019e). According to Miss Cynthia, Mr. Gerhard was haunted by the fate of his first collection and often showed her pictures of it. She said he was sad and angry because he lost items he would not find again.

Twenty five years later, Mr. Gerhard formed a museum committee and with its members approached the Greater Aranya Municipality (GAM), a new local body that came about after the fall of apartheid. The new authority seemed keen on a local museum that celebrated local culture. Miss Cynthia recalled that the museum was officially opened on 24 June 1995 by then-mayor Felix Masinge. Mr. Gerhard spent his "own money and that of private donors" to fund the opening of the museum (Anon 2019e). A newspaper article from Mr. Gerhard's personal file described the opening. Mr. Gerhard, the museum committee, several invited guests and the "general public" were in attendance. As master of ceremony, Prof Louis Changuion, a local historian and book publisher, paid tribute to the committee members and the local community who had done much in making the museum possible. He said Aranya's children and incoming visitors would be able to learn about the past of the town and its people in the museum (Coetzee 2018).

Mr. Gerhard explained to the journalist that he started his second collection because he was "adamant not to lose the local cultures embodied" (Coetzee 2018) in artefacts, he was "unbowed" by the loss[2] of his first collection and committed to collect again (Anon 2019e). The new collection comprised of roughly 2 000 "ethnological artefacts" from South Africa and other African countries (Ettmayr 2014). In the descriptive inventory that Mr. Gerhard held in the museum, he described its collection as,

> One of the smallest and youngest museums in South Africa. The permanent exhibition consists primarily of ethnological artefacts of the local Tsonga and North Sotho tribes. These include weapons, pottery, basketry, beadwork, Sotho sacred drums, and royal drums of the Rain Queen Modjadji as well as utensils as used in everyday life. We also have the world's largest collection of pole-carvings from this region. At present, more than 100 items are on loan to other museums, such as the only known wooden initiation mask in South Africa, initiation figures and a sacred drum too big to fit through our doors.

In 2018, the Aranya museum was less organised than this description would have led the casual reader to believe. The collection included a large number of artefacts from Benin, West Africa, Ife, Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He collected endless versions of the same type of artefact; different pots, masks, bowls and drums. Nothing had labels to describe their functions or origins and I thought that it looked like a museum of anything African. In his 20th anniversary report, Mr. Gerhard described his museum as a "treasure house" of "different African cultures" starting with the "cultures and people" that dominated the Greater Aranya Area (Schneider 2015).

In South Africa's colonial and apartheid history, national museums contributed to the colony's civic identity, and in the case of South Africa, that essentially meant white identities (Schramm 2016: 132). Colonial and apartheid ethnological museums helped reassure and justify white dominance by representing the colonised as a primitive "other", far removed from the civilised environs of white living (MacKenzie 2009:115). Mr. Gerhard's desire to construct a museum dominated solely by Tsonga and Sotho artefacts would have served that exact ideology. His museum would have formed part of exhibits and representations of Africa's natural environment and cultural history, while artefacts of whites or ancient cultures were something entirely distinct and did not feature in such displays (MacKenzie 2009:155). This then begged the question as to why the Aranya Town Council did not endorse Mr. Gerhard original plan to establish a museum of African cultural artefacts. According to Mr. Gerhard,

[2] Witt did not say he "lost" his first collection in the five monthly reports I had had access to. However, from my conversation with Miss Cynthia, that is how he typified his relationship to his first collection.

"A change of local government… altered the attitude of having a museum with artefacts dominated by Sotho and Tsonga objects" (Schneider 2016), and in an interview with a journalist he said "neither the present nor previous government are in the slightest interested in respecting African culture" (Anon 2014b).

The Aranya Museum

Miss Cynthia joined Mr. Gerhard in the museum in 2003. According to her, Mr. Gerhard came into the museum on a daily basis between 10h00 and 13h00 to check that everything was running smoothly. In the beginning, Miss Cynthia said he used the time every day to teach her about the artefacts, and in later years, when she knew all the "stories", he came to check on her, to see if she needed anything. The only other time Mr. Gerhard came to the museum was when visitors with a specialised interest in the museum made appointments with him to meet him there. He would answer all their questions and, said Miss Cynthia, tell them "everything they wanted to know". Mr. Gerhard offered this service to museum visitors on the museum signboard and in his descriptive inventory he also kept in his personal file.

Mr. Gerhard regarded himself as a professional in the museum industry. He undersigned each monthly report under the title "curator", and in his November 2016 report, he referred to himself as "the collector" (Schneider 2016). Mr. Gerhard was very meticulous in his record-keeping of the museum. He kept and filed various documents dating back to 1995; from newspaper clippings and travel guide excerpts that mention the museum, to monthly reports for the GAM, legal documents, sketches of various pots, and several other documents including his descriptive inventory of the museum. The documents were ordered by type, sketches of pots, newspaper and travel guide clippings, and legal documents and the monthly reports. This scrupulous record keeping, of documents sourced internally and externally, was testimony to Mr. Gerhard's commitment to his job as curator. In my interview with him, Mr. Petrus insisted that I look through Mr. Gerhard's personal file. The majority of the documents in the file praised the museum and those working in it for their unwavering commitment in keeping the museum open.

In his December 2016 monthly report to the GAM, lodged at the museum, Mr. Gerhard complained extensively about the structural problems that plagued the museum building; maintenance problems that could have been "rectified by the GAM with little effort and labour" years ago (Schneider 2017). The maintenance required was extensive, from repairs to the fence,

to the painting of the red gate, the replacement and fitting of down-pipes and gutters to the repairs to broken window blinds. Mr. Gerhard highlighted these issues in three out of the five monthly reports in his file. In 1995, when he moved into the museum building, Mr. Gerhard was told that the building was a temporary measure and that a more suitable building would be erected. Twenty years later, in 2015, that promise had still not been fulfilled (Schneider 2015) and Mr. Gerhard started a petition for a new and properly equipped museum building. 32 000 people from the area and visitors to the museum signed this petition. It was not effective. In his subsequent monthly reports, Mr. Gerhard repeatedly wrote about his concern over the delicate, fragile nature of the artefacts and the need for an appropriate space that would not be detrimental to their quality (Schneider 2015).

Mr. Gerhard's troubles with the municipality extended beyond the museum building. Miss Cynthia often spoke about the problem of the museum's parking. A few years ago, she was not exactly sure when, the museum's parking was reassigned and designated for "Municipal Officers only" (Schneider 2017). After it happened, Mr. Gerhard wrote in his April 2015 report that "the new parking facilities are apparently reserved for the privileged, as there is no provision made for the museum. Nor is there any parking provided for visitors to the only noteworthy place in Aranya" (Schneider 2015). An employee of the Aranya Library, who had dealt with Mr. Gerhard on numerous occasions, described him as a "stubborn man" who was reluctant to return the museum premises to the municipality. His stubbornness also meant that the library had no information on the museum and that the history of the museum had died with Mr. Gerhard. The municipality also never fixed a road sign that continued to direct museum visitors in the wrong direction. The museum's telephone connection had also been "sabotaged years ago" (Schneider 2017), yet this faulty number was still listed in the municipality's directory. Mr. Gerhard was also at odds with the GAM because they did not replace the Aranya Museum signboard that was stolen several years before 2015.[3] In 2015, Mr. Gerhard lamented that these problems continued to severely impact on the museum's traffic flow.

Mr. Gerhard's dealings with the GAM come across as never-ending discussions on the same topics for which agreements were seldom reached. In his April 2015 report, Mr. Gerhard accused the GAM of being disinterested in the working and success of the museum. His missive to the GAM summed it up, "I am under the impression that the museum is an unwanted venue in the eyes of the decision makers. As this is going on for years, we have arrived at the

[3] I could not get access to Witt's monthly reports held at the municipality to obtain precise dates for when the museum's telephone connection was "sabotaged" and its signboard stolen.

conclusion that the strangling fig tree at the entrance to the museum has become symbolic of our circumstances" (Schneider 2015). Mr. Gerhard's endless pleas over the years certainly never yielded results as the complaints were depressingly repetitive. He wrote, "We appear to be side-lined when it comes to take care of what we do. The authorities are very silent when it comes to the museum. This certainly is causing an injury to our efforts" (Schneider 2015).

Mr. Gerhard quoted visitors' comments in the museum's monthly reports that depicted their support for and appreciation of his dedication to display "culture". Visitors described the museum as excellent, educational and intriguing while others commented on the artefacts saying that "all reading materials, each artefact has a story" and the collection is of "almost all material available from the Tsonga and Lowveld Sotho". Mr. Gerhard used these comments (and others) to show others agreed with and supported his practice. In April 2015, in an apparent attempt to rouse a response from the GAM, Mr. Gerhard quoted many visitors' comments about the rundown state of the building. The visitors complained about the rundown state of the museum building saying, "there must be renovations to this museum" (Schneider 2015). These were complaints that he was at pains to show were made many times before. Apart from his monthly reports to the GAM, Mr. Gerhard also leaned on local journalists to publicise the museum's plight. As one Bulletin (Anon 2011b) article stated, "Surely, the museum deserves better from the GAM". A *MacMillan Travel* excerpt from Mr. Gerhard's personal file also mentioned the funding problems the museum continually experienced with the GAM. Both journalists were sympathetic to his continued struggle to keep the Aranya Museum open and running.

In his June 2015 report, while complaining that the museum and those working in it were "giving more than what they received", Mr. Gerhard acknowledged that the museum had a "shabby outside appearance" and that it suffered from the "unprofessional display" of cultural materials (Schneider 2015). Regardless of these difficulties, and his own role in them, in the 20th anniversary report Mr. Gerhard wrote that he refused to close the museum because he had to keep in mind two audiences; the locals who were the museum's main supporters, and the international audience of fellow museum curators. He explained, "we did not want to have to inform other museums throughout the world to know of what had happened. We could not stop and just close the museum" (Schneider 2015). Closer to home, he also warned that if the service the museum provided for individuals, "counted as the most traditional orientated ones" were to stop, "the disenchantment of our supporters would have been too great" (Schneider 2015).

Mr. Gerhard expressed strong opinions about the role that the museum served in Aranya. He promoted the museum as a manifestation of the image of the town, a reflection of its inhabitants and the neglect of its managers. Mr. Gerhard felt that the museum and its employees provided a service that was in demand in Aranya and that they provided this service for free. The museum did not charge an entry fee because it exhibited the cultural material of many impoverished people of the area, he said (Schneider 2015). Mr. Gerhard felt that to deny those people entrance to the museum and access to their material heritage would "shame" the museum. In his 20th anniversary report, Mr. Gerhard wrote:

> We are trying to preserve a culture with which they [visitors] can identify themselves. This culture has grown within their inherited realm. It is not something foreign that was brought to them. They are coming to us to have their ancestral heritage and this is their free choice. Here they come in touch with a reality that they need, and want to cherish.

Mr. Gerhard, the hero-collector

According to Mr. Gerhard's original prospectus for the Aranya Museum, its central role was the preservation of African artefacts and cultures. In the piece, Mr. Gerhard outlined the "disappearance" of local/African cultures and showed how his museum would stem the tide on this process but warned that he could not take on this task alone. He called on "the current administrators", the municipality, to "realise that they have a moral obligation to further the intellectual and educational/historical needs of our local population" by putting them in touch with their culture at the Aranya Museum, and this could only be done with the financial assistance of the municipality (Schneider 2015). It was of paramount importance to him that the material culture and artefacts that were produced and crafted in Aranya, and now housed in the museum, remained in Aranya, and that "African artefacts remain in Africa" (Coetzee 2018). In the interview with a journalist, Mr. Gerhard insisted that local cultures were "embedded in those artefacts" (Coetzee 2018), which was why collecting African cultural artefacts preserved "cultures that are under threat of disappearing" (Ettmayr 2014). He "did not want the history enveloped in pottery [and other artefacts] to be lost". According to Mr. Gerhard, "a nation should preserve cultures" and such preserved cultures should be used to make today's youth "aware of their heritage" (Ettmayr 2014). In his June 2015 report, he wrote about the evident degeneration and disinterest in local culture among local administrators and the general public, and what role preservation, in the form of his museum, could play in re-forming and reviving such cultures.

Mr. Gerhard's collecting practices and his underlying motivation, to preserve the material culture of African communities at risk of disappearing, resonated with a collecting practice most commonly associated with colonial collectors who sought to fill national museums with materials from dwindling native and indigenous communities (Leggasick & Rassool 2000: 2). As their starting point, colonial ethnographic museums originally had exhibitions that focused on narratives about the "Other", colonised people. Implicit in colonialism was the political project of eroticising the "Other" and the derogatory objectification of their person and material culture in colonial museum.

It was seen as part of the coloniser's duty to assemble and compile a complete record as possible of their new land's natural history (Skotnes 1996:67). Indigenous and native people were represented in museums as primitives in the colony, as members of the animal kingdom listed and categorised among the "weird and wonderful fauna of distant lands" in relation to the civilised coloniser above nature in the empire (Skotnes 1996:67). The colonial collectors' conscious display of native and indigenous peoples as primitive was at the centre of the distinction they made between themselves and those they colonised and placed in colonial museums. Bushmen and Khoisan remains were particularly sought after by South Africa's colonial museums. Toward the latter half of the nineteenth century, colonial scientists, and a variety of other actors in the humanities and social sciences, became consumed with the racial classification of the Bushmen and Khoisan brain and skull (Gordon 1992: 187-8). The task of collecting indigenous skeletons and materials was done under the assumption that Bushmen were among the most primitive of human types, under threat of extinction, and therefore a prime source of information for colonial and South African actors concerned with racial science, physical anthropology and finding the 'essence' of humanity (Legassick & Rassool 2000: v; Skotnes 1996:68). European intellectual circles moulded the Bushmen into an anthropological object which they propelled into scientific prominence within South Africa's borders and abroad to demonstrate the importance of the colony (Gordon 1992:187; MacKenzie; 2003:266; Schramm 2014:3). Placing indigenous peoples in such a primitive context demonstrated the distance of indigenous societies from the progress of modernity symbolised by colonial museums and their categorical display of the "pre-modern", indigenous people (MacKenzie 2003:4). This particular construction of indigenous people in colonial museums was appropriated as a justification of their colonialisation (MacKenzie 2003:5). If they were thought to be vanishing, and their way of life with them, then colonialists could

consider the land, and its natural resources, uninhabited and therefore legitimate their ownership of it (Schramm 2016: 132).

In South Africa's colonial and apartheid past, native and indigenous cultures were viewed, and represented in museums as bounded by timeless traditions, as static and unchanging representations of cultures that existed in a nonspecific ethnographic present (Peers & Brown 2003: 48, 189). Yet, indigenous people were also thought to be making progress "in the scale of civilisation, and consequently emerging from the situation they were in" (MacKenzie 2003: 106). Very often, such changes were viewed with alarm as evidence of "westernisation" and miscegenation (Rich, 1990: 676). In response to this alarm, separate education programmes were allocated to white and African races that were based on intelligence tests of cultural conditions and mental ability. Native education programmes were implemented according to their "peculiar characteristics", according to the "slowness" of Africans. And further, the preoccupation with interracial sexual relations and the threat to white racial purity was what spurred the South African Parliament to pass the Immorality Act of 1927 prohibiting sexual relations across the colour line (Rich, 1990: 675-6). Colonial museums and curators thus felt it necessary to procure and preserve specimens and "relics of the former customs and mannerism" of indigenous people before such objects were entirely lost to modernisation, miscegenation and the increasing use of objects of European manufacture (MacKenzie 2003: 106, 112).

Museums in colonial territories, such as South Africa, were thus differently focused than those in Europe. They represented a western view of the colony, and as such an extension of the metropole. Colonial museums were considered a source of national pride and promoted a colonial sense of nationalism and achievement on an international stage (MacKenzie 2003: 12, 78; Peers & Brown 2003: 20). In South Africa, colonial museums interacted with a white populace by means of exhibitions that reflected the diversity of the colony's natural products. In 1806, the British settled permanently in the Cape and by 1825 the South African Museum (SAM) was constructed to allow colonists to become acquainted with the general and local resources of the colony (MacKenzie 2003: 78, 80-1). At the beginning of the 1890s, collectors and curators invested more time and effort into their search for exotic cultural materials, and in particular human skeletons and remains, as more modes of representation of indigenous and native cultures were entering museum exhibitions (Legassick & Rassool 2000: 2; MacKenzie 2009: 113).

In many respects, Mr. Gerhard's business of presenting "things" that carried highly specific meanings about local culture, was very close to MacKenzie's (2009:11-12) description of cultural artefacts as "inanimate emissaries" that start to attain an aura independent of people or context when they are exhibited in a colonial museum tradition (MacKenzie 2009:12). Mr. Gerhard said to Coetzee (2018), "the pottery is a representative of the area and the cultures… there is so much experience embedded in each piece". His meticulous records (and collections) of pots, bowls, pipes, and so forth were also geared at completeness. Yet he said in the 20th anniversary report, he still intended to collect more verbal histories from the area "as remembered by our few remaining old peoples" (Schneider 2015). His was an attempt to present his museum visitor, and hopefully someone who was looking for a piece of his/her unsullied lost culture, a complete picture of Tsonga and Sotho "cultures".

Miss Cynthia told me several stories about Mr. Gerhard's collecting practices. She said he would travel to different places around Aranya and further away and came back with artefacts he bought. He also told her stories about sleeping in "the bushes" because when he collected some of the older artefacts, there were no houses "back then". Miss Cynthia remarked that Mr. Gerhard was inclined, but not limited to settlements and villages he knew had chiefs. When he found such villages he asked its inhabitants if they had items of their chief they would be willing to sell to him. When Mr. Gerhard bought the items he also asked the owners how they used the artefact or what it meant to them. Miss Cynthia said it was important to Mr. Gerhard that he knew something about the item he was buying. She said he spent many years compiling a book that contained information and stories, some of the artefacts he brought and others about Tsonga tales and legends.

I asked Miss Cynthia about the artefacts Mr. Gerhard got from Queen Modjadji IV. Remembering my first tour of the museum in December 2018, I asked her if she knew why the queen gave him the artefacts. She said Mr. Gerhard knew Queen Modjadji IV and she gifted him objects of cultural significance from the time of her reign. Mr. Gerhard displayed Queen Modjadji IV's house guard and a photograph of it, the bowl in which her food was prepared and the plate she ate from, a ritual pot used during rainmaking ceremonies, wood figurines carved for her as a gift, and the poles that surrounded her courtyard stacked behind the door of the drums room (see Figure 6). Mr. Gerhard also displayed portraits of the late Rain Queens. In my interview with Mr. Musa, a Modjadji tourism operator and a relation of the royal family, I asked him if he knew anything about the connection between Mr. Gerhard and Queen Modjadji IV. Mr. Musa remembered Mr. Gerhard as being "very patient" with the Royal

Council, who acted as intermediaries between the Queen and Mr. Gerhard. They relayed his request to display the items in the museum and took ages to deliberate and get back to Mr. Gerhard. Mr. Musa remembered Mr. Gerhard waiting in the courtyard while the Queen met with the Royal Council in the royal house to decide whether or not to "give him those things". When I asked if Mr. Gerhard gave the Queen anything in return for the artefacts, Mr. Musa said "not that I know about, there was not an exchange… I doubt there was compensation". Mr. Musa did however say that "we had hoped Mr. Gerhard would keep the items for us in case we lose or damage them".

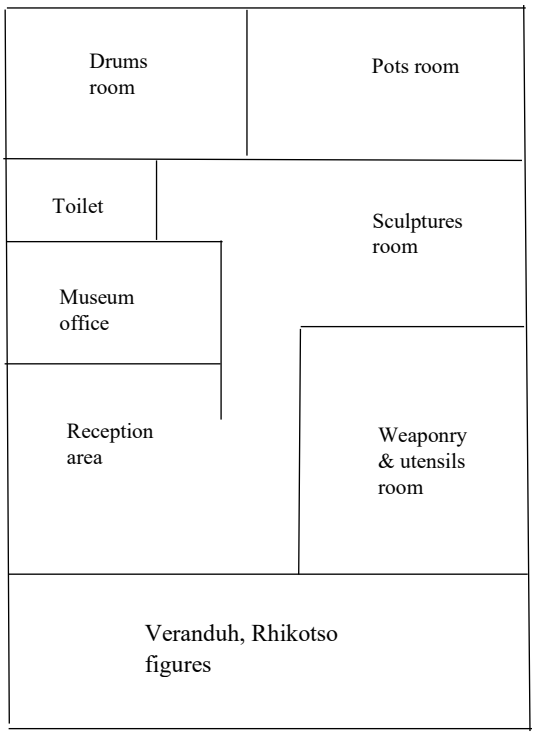

Figure 6: Aranya museum layout. Source: L Hendricks, date: 27/12/2019

Mr. Gerhard was apparently very proud of his connection to Rain Queen Modjadji IV and prized her artefacts above the majority of the other artefacts in his collection. His collection of Modjadji artefacts were all placed at the entrance of the drums room (see Figure 6). Photographs of Queen Modjadji III, IV, V and VI hung on the wall, and as I closed the door, there were poles that used to surround the royal compound and a framed map outlining the layout of the royal village along with the other Modjadji artefacts. Mr. Gerhard's singling out of his Modjadji collection reverberated with sentimentalities of the colonial collector who collected amour, weaponry and above all else, royal and chiefly regalia of colonised societies, to be shipped and exhibited throughout national, regional and civic museums in Britain (MacKenzie 2003:13). Mr. Gerhard, like the colonial collector, assigned primacy to objects

that were directly tied to chieftaincies and royalty, their value inherent in their connection to and relationship with specific highly-placed people. Appadurai (1986:5) theorised that the meaning of objects derived from their trajectories through human relationships. Artefacts could thus be regarded as having life histories that were culturally regulated and open to interpretation. Once objects changed hands, their social and human contexts were illuminated (Appadurai 1986:17-8). In this framework, Mr. Gerhard desired chiefly and queenly artefacts for their inherent value stemming from their history. When he received the artefacts, he attached to them a sentimental value based on their ownership history with Queen Modjadji IV. Mr. Gerhard prioritised the relationship between the Queen and her artefacts, and so too his relationship to her artefacts.

Mr. Gerhard wrote that the Modjadji collection contained artefacts "that belonged to the previous, late Rain Queen, items of this nature are extremely difficult to obtain because of their religious connotations". Yet this sacred drum was not among the artefacts in the museum, according to Miss Cynthia, the drum was too big to fit through the museum doors and was held in storage in "*Industria*" (industrial district of Aranya). Mr. Gerhard's fascination with chiefly and royal artefacts was not limited to the Modjadji queen. As Miss Cynthia said, Mr. Gerhard was interested in chiefly and royal artefacts regardless of which African culture it belonged to. Aside from the Modjadji artefacts, Mr. Gerhard collected several other artefacts that belonged to "chiefs" from outside South Africa. He had two chairs said to belong to two different Congolese chiefs and one from a "chief" in the Ivory Coast.

Mr. Gerhard's interest in royal, religious or ritual artefacts was not unlike the colonial collectors who collected African artefacts, specifically seeking those with royal or religious connotations, and placed them in a "cabinet of curiosities" as "trophies of colonialism", empire and conquest (Beidelman 1997: 8; Mackenzie 2009: 13). But unlike the museums in Britain that used these displays to illustrate the vast dominance and power of the empire to itself, museums in the colonies displayed similar objects to glorify the work and reach of the empire to those subjected to it (MacKenzie 2009: 13). For instance, during 1912-1913, the SAM received "idols, ornaments, arms" and other artefacts from various African states such as Nigeria and Egypt that it put on display. The SAM's 1914 Annual Report also mentioned that the museum held rainmaking artefacts from Southern Rhodesia[4] (MacKenzie 2009: 92).

[4] After independence 1980, Southern Rhodesia became Zimbabwe

Apart from his own collecting trips and the work he did in convincing the queen's council to part with a few artefacts for his museum, Mr. Gerhard also bought artefacts from people who brought them to the museum. Miss Cynthia said Mr. Gerhard only bought "unique" items. To illustrate, she took out a crescent-moon shaped powder box made of dark wood from the reception desk and held it out for me to inspect. She said that a Congolese man had brought the powder box to the museum, hoping that Mr. Gerhard would buy it as he knew Mr. Gerhard also collected artefacts from tribes in Northern Congo. The box looked like nothing else on display in the museum, Miss Cynthia said such boxes were widely used in the Congo yet she did not know what kind of powders the box originally contained.

While the colonial ethnographic museum spurred on the acquisition and display of colonised societies' objects, it also led to the rise of the "hero collector" bent on salvaging objects from decay, damage or time (Pieterse 2005: 164). This collector, whose work stood central to the colonial project, often turned to dubious and unscrupulous methods to obtain specimens, idols, ornaments, arms and other objects from Bushmen, Khoisan and other indigenous groups. There is evidence that the SAM, and many other colonial museums in South Africa such as the Albany Museum in Grahamstown, the Kaffrarian Museum in King William's Town and the McGregor Museum in Kimberley all sanctioned such collecting behaviour (MacKenzie 2003: 11, 79). Skeletal remains of Bushmen and Khoisan were unlawfully exhumed, their heads decapitated, and their facial skin removed before being sold, traded and displayed in national museums in South Africa and abroad (Skotnes 1996: 73). Collectors were given official permission to re-appropriate indigenous materials and utensils, violate graves in the name of science and exhume recently-buried bodies under the compliance of state authorities (Legassick & Rassool 2000: v). A variety of scientists, administrators, nationalist, missionaries and amateurs of every kind were employed in this capacity in South Africa (Skotnes 1996: 67).

In post-apartheid South Africa, many scholars have questioned and analysed the violent and undignified nature of colonial traditions of collecting and exhibiting in South Africa's museums, especially when it came to their preservation mandate (Simic 2006: 29-30; Skotnes 1996: 73). In the name of preservation, colonial collectors and curators took detailed measurements and models of living specimens to be displayed, looted graves in search of native and indigenous remains suitable for examination and trade, and displayed everyday utensils and items as forms of high art (MacKenzie 2003: 10). Skotnes (1996) illuminated the objectification that indigenous bodies were subjected to, and the violent process by which they

were fragmented into casts, bones, body parts and other abstract measurements under and after colonial rule (cf. Schramm 2016: 132). Post-apartheid, the history of violence and objectification in colonial collecting practices was severely critiqued by scholars and "source communities" on the grounds that it undermined the humanity of source communities and because they represented inadmissible racist attitudes (MacKenzie 2003: 10). In light of such critiques, many museums relinquished violently collected materials and "source communities" actively started claiming ownership to such materials held by museums (Peers & Brown 2003: 19; Schramm 2014: 6).

In intention, Mr. Gerhard's collection shared some of the colonial collector's sentiments about local cultures and the threat of modernisation. Like them, Mr. Gerhard justified his collection as an attempt to save the materials and knowledge of indigenous people at risk of disappearing. In this, he was not an innocent collector but someone who framed himself as a cultural patriarch, someone who could, by virtue of his comparative social and economic position, and cultural capital, hold valuable artefacts in trust for a whole community. Mr. Gerhard portrayed himself as the type of "hero" collector and museum curator that went beyond the call of duty in his efforts to salvage and preserve the material culture of African cultures for future generations; sleeping in bushes, travelling enormous distances and starting a collection for a second time after a bitter disappointment. Mr. Musa's statement, that they had hoped Mr. Gerhard would keep safe their treasured items, because they feared the items may be damaged, lost to time or simply forgotten, gave me the impression that the community had bought into this framing. By all indications, this was not a function of his direct interaction with the community but perhaps mirrored internalised racial attitudes still current in the town (see Chapter 3). This was where I found Mr. Gerhard's practice resonated with that of the colonial collector.

Mr. Gerhard's collecting methods, however, differed from colonial ones, especially the violent methods employed by colonial collectors in South Africa who were undeterred in their efforts to collect, measure, categorise and preserve disappearing native and indigenous peoples (see Legassick & Rassool 2000: 3; Skotnes 1996: 20). His display also did not mark objects or local people as "primitive" nor as part of Africa's natural history and landscape; his small museum certainly did not have space for the naturalistic dioramas of larger museums (Davison 2018: 81-97; Sapa 2014). Instead, Mr. Gerhard grouped cultural artefacts to show variety and ingenuity, yet also grouped according to distinguished typologies; all pottery, all drums and all sculptures, so that artefacts from different cultures were placed together. Different cultures

were indistinguishable in this display, and without the guided tour, Mr. Gerhard's exhibition of the artefacts reflected a homogenous Africa rather than independent collections of single cultures. As Franz Boas argued in the late nineteenth century, the "arrangement of similar artefacts into a series does not serve the purpose of ethnological collections" (Jenkins 1994: 263). Instead, he proposed that artefacts, when arranged according to cultures in their respective historical and ethnological context, would exude the particular style of each group, and in so doing people can come to understand the "character" of a single culture (Jenkins 1994: 263-4). Mr. Gerhard's museum did not achieve this goal and seemed to be organised on a much older ethnological tradition.

Mr. Gerhard's collecting style and practices were more precisely reminiscent of a kind of "salvage colonialism", a variety of the German colonial project, seen in his attempt to protect African cultures "against the induction of culture-levelling exposure to capitalist modernity" (Steinmetz 2007: 13). Mr. Gerhard's collecting practices, and therefore his "colonial project", was thus not tied to state colonialism or the politics of local bureaucrats at the time. Just as the German colonial government of the early 1900s, and early anthropologists in the United States of America, gathered material artefacts to protect them from the inevitable loss that would accompany modernisation, Mr. Gerhard presented himself, in written reports and interviews with journalists, as a "protector" of African people's timeless, unique traditions (Steinmetz 2007: 318). He also advocated for the preservation of local native cultures, customs and character under threat of withering away (Steinmetz 2007: 319).

The Aranya Museum and its source communities

While Mr. Gerhard was centrally concerned with "local culture" and "Africa", he had little contact with the surrounding communities from which he sourced his artefacts or remnants of culture despite the fact that he worked, and kept the museum open "for the love of the people" (Schneider 2019). According to Miss Cynthia, Mr. Gerhard's construction and display of the artefacts was done independently and without consulting the community members from which the items originated. Yet, Miss Cynthia also hinted at a pattern in which locals and indigenous people had the decision-making power when it came to which objects he collected; they decided which objects were for sale and how much money they wanted in exchange for the items. Locals, and people abroad, also knew of Mr. Gerhard's interest in African artefacts and they knew he was willing to buy artefacts.

During the mid-19th century, a one-way relationship existed between colonial museums as institutions with imperial power and source communities as colonialised regions. Ethnographic objects were collected and collections were compiled and curated in colonial museums on the premise that museum staff and other actors should preserve the remnants of a dying race for the benefit of future generations (Peers & Brown 2005: 1). Due to increasing critique of such relationships and practices, there is a rising tendency among museum staff at metropolitan museums in South Africa to engage and incorporate source communities into exhibition and knowledge-making processes. Smaller, more localised museums, such as the Hermanus town museum also followed suite (Schramm 2016: 138). Despite this wider tendency, Miss Cynthia said Mr. Gerhard's engagement with source communities only went so far as purchasing items from them and paying them for the accompanying information. Yet, Mr. Musa's statement, "there was no exchange… no compensation" for the Queen's artefacts made it clear that Mr. Gerhard did not always buy artefacts and that he had in some measure depended on relationships with locals to acquire artefacts for his museum. But this relationship was very contained and did not extend to a co-working relationship with such source communities- or any consideration that they would ever lay claim to artefacts in the museum. This was despite the fact that Mr. Gerhard was acutely aware of the ever-increasing notion that source communities had a legitimate moral and cultural stake in museum artefacts and could lay claim to their material culture currently held by museums (Peers & Brown 2005: 2). Indeed, Mr. Gerhard made much of his inclusion in a wider museum practice community and in his participation in that community.

Through interviews with Miss Cynthia, Mr. Petrus and Mr. Musa, I had the impression that there were parties who questioned Mr. Gerhard's collections and that he was apprehensive about potential claims. Miss Cynthia's apprehension, when I mentioned to her my intention of speaking to Modjadji source community members before my interview with Mr. Petrus, first sparked this thought. My suspicions were then reiterated in my interview with Mr. Musa in the following week when he disagreed rather strongly with Mr. Gerhard's assigned descriptions of certain Modjadji artefacts.

A guided tour of the Aranya Museum

Later in my first week in the museum I asked Miss Cynthia to take me on another tour of the museum's artefacts. As we arrived in the pots room (see Figure 6), the last room of the guided

tour, Miss Cynthia pointed to the cabinet immediately to her left. She pointed to one specific pot saying, “This one is 1500 years old”, and then she went along the row, “This pot, it is from the Sotho people, eighty years old, it is used to store traditional beer. It is made from clay.” Pointing to the one next to it, “This one is forty years old it is also from the Sotho. It was used to store water”. She moved to the row below, pointing at each pot in succession, “And with this pots here they used to drink water, and whatever else they drank. And then this one was for washing their hands. And then this one was for washing the babies”. Miss Cynthia confirmed that every pot had a specific use and would not be used for another purpose. She then walked over to the next cabinet and asked me if I remembered the Sotho beads from the previous room. I said yes and Miss Cynthia pointed at more pots, “One, two, three are the same, the decoration is the same as the beads”. She continued to point at different pots, “One, two are from the Tsonga people”. I asked what she meant when she said the pots were decorated the same as the beads. Miss Cynthia went back to the first pots she showed me, and said “These are Sotho, there is no red, and then with Tsonga there is all and any colours”, just like the Sotho and Tsonga beads.

Throughout the tour, Miss Cynthia spoke very fast as she described the artefacts; we went through the museum at a fast pace, moving very quickly from one artefact to another, which made it difficult to fully grasp and comprehend her explanations. For some artefacts, Miss Cynthia only named them, which left me wanting more information; yet before I could ask, she continued drawing my attention to yet another artefact. For artefacts for which she did not describe a function, Miss Cynthia told me what she called a “story”, usually relating to cultural myths, rituals and traditions. One of these artefacts was the Modjadji house guard (see Figure 7), a small carving of a short figure with one eye and a big moustache. Miss Cynthia explained that “the purpose of this house guard was to protect [the Modjadji household] from evil spirits because back then they believed that people had bad spirits, evil spirits. So this thing protects them from evil spirits”. Her descriptions and the lack of labelled artefacts made me wonder if one could go through the museum without a guide, how visitors would come to comprehend the notion that the artefacts were representative of the cultures of the area, or most specifically, the differences and variations among the artefacts of the different cultures supposedly represented here.

Figure 7: The house guard. Source: L Hendricks, date: 04/12/2018

Mr. Gerhard designed the tour that gave visitors a vague approximation of the origins, uses and beliefs associated with the artefacts in the museum. He collected and wrote "stories" for each artefact that were narrated in a parrot-like fashion by docile museum guides. As such, these guides only provided visitors with an imaginary substitute of the natural, social, functional or spiritual context of the artefacts (cf. MacKenzie 2009: 11). Mr. Gerhard embellished the artefacts with his own identity marking them as part of his private collection, he embellished them with his own narrative of their origins and perception of their cultural significance. But as a rambled-off narrative with little coherence, his tour offered the impression of undifferentiated African cultures. Without the tour, and without labels and descriptions of the artefacts, the museum resembled a storehouse of countless artefacts and indistinguishable cultures that visitors would be unable to differentiate between unless they had prior knowledge about the artefacts.

By placing the artefacts in a context of his design and by controlling their representation and reception, Mr. Gerhard gave the museum artefacts an alternate social life, attained through their change in status from everyday items to representations of culture, which also offered the possibility of writing their biographies (MacKenzie 2009: 11). Though Mr. Gerhard intended to advertise the similarity between African cultures in his display, he designed the guided tour to induce in visitors the comparison of difference. Take for example the headrests, which Miss Cynthia described as follows, "And then here we've got wooden pillows which they used back then" indicating to one shelf in the display cabinet of the sculptures room". She pointed to objects that looked like neck-stands. Ponting to the front row, she said, "and then one two three

are from the Tsonga people", she lifted her hand slightly to indicate to the headrests behind the Tsonga headrests saying, "the one at the back is from the Sotho, then one at the back is Venda, and then the one at the back is from Zulu" her hand moving along the headrests in the back row (see Figure 8). Miss Cynthia's hand then moved again as she indicated to headrests in the front of the display cabinet that looked slightly different because they had figures carved into them, "and then these ones are from Congo… the people of the Congo, they like to decorate with animals, see" clearly showing me how animals were carved into the Congo headrests (see Figure 9).

Figure 8: headrest. Source: L Hendricks, date: 04/12/2018

Figure 9: Congolese headrest. Source: L Hendricks, date: 04/12/2018

Miss Cynthia brought my attention to a particular difference in the same artefacts from different cultures. In another part of the tour, when Miss Cynthia was showing me Tsonga and Sotho beadwork, I was a bit confused as to what the difference between the beadwork was. Miss Cynthia adamantly pointed out that Sotho people did not use red beads because they associated it with blood and only used white beads to separate beads of other colours, while Tsonga people held no particular perceptions to bead colours and used them indiscriminately in their beadwork. Miss Cynthia drew out minute difference in artefacts that were seemingly similar to the unknowledgeable viewer such as myself.

Exhibitions and discourses about the Other require this exact consideration of difference and similarity (Pieterse 2005: 164). Pieterse (2005: 164) argued that representations of the Other were either exoticising in their emphasis on difference, or assimilating in the emphasis on similarities. Mr. Gerhard's guided tour accomplished both.

Through the guided tour, Mr. Gerhard also presented the artefacts as belonging to an older time, out of use and, in his words, part of the local people's "ancestral heritage" (Schneider 2015). Miss Cynthia frequently used phrases that alluded to an earlier time in which the objects she showed me were actually used. She said things like, "back then" and "we no longer use these" or "they no longer do it". The connotation of such phrases to a more traditional time where olden-day notions of the world and solutions to uncertainty applied, framed the artefacts, and the cultures they represented, as belonging to an ancient time outside the circuit of Mr. Gerhard's own time. Johannes Fabian (1983: 30), *Time and the Other*, spoke of such distancing devices that labelled living societies and particular styles of thought as "savage" or "primitive". Adjectives, like "mythical, ritual, or even tribal" served the same function by placing them in another time (Fabian 1983: 30). The tour created a special and temporal distance between Mr. Gerhard and the cultures he collected, thereby othering them. In the museum's exhibition and the narrative of his guided tour, Mr. Gerhard denied the "coevalness" of the cultures he represented with his own time and culture (Fabian 1983: 31).

Miss Cynthia

I was sitting on one of the concrete slabs under the veranda one afternoon while the museum was quiet. Before long, Miss Cynthia walked out and came to stand just to the right of me, next to boxes filled with broken shards of pots. Earlier in that week, Miss Cynthia said that Mr. Gerhard never threw the broken pots away because their value stemmed from their rarity and the improbability of discovering the pots again. I got up to stand next to her and she took a shard from the top of the boxes. Turning the shard around in her hands, she explained how she could look at a piece and tell how big it was, from which culture it originated, and what it was used for. She explained that the shard she held was a piece from a pot used to collect and store water. Miss Cynthia said she could tell this from the rim of the shard. On a question from me, she explained that the patterns on the shard indicated its origin culture, saying "this one was from the Tsonga culture", as she went on. Smiling broadly, she commented that the only reason

she could tell so much from broken shards of pots was because Mr. Gerhard had taught her, as he had taught her everything else she knew about the museum and its artefacts.

Miss Cynthia came to work in the museum when Mr. Gerhard had asked her friend who also lived in Nkowakowa if he knew anyone willing to assist him in the museum. The friend suggested that Miss Cynthia take up the job. Initially, Miss Cynthia did not know where the museum was, and like me, had to ask for directions. When she found the museum and met Mr. Gerhard, she told him that her friend had sent her to work at the museum. Miss Cynthia worked in the museum for 16 years because she enjoyed her job. She said she loved learning about the artefacts and educating visitors through the guided tours. When I asked her if she would have liked to do something else, she insisted that she did not want to do anything else. Miss Cynthia was well-known in Aranya, always greeting and talking to people who worked at the municipality, the library and the shop across the road.

On one of my last days at the museum, I asked Miss Cynthia about her favourite artefact in the museum. She did not answer me but changed the topic to talk about Mr. Gerhard. She said he could never pick one artefact in the museum as his favourite, which was why she could not either. Miss Cynthia cheerfully reminisced that Mr. Gerhard also asked her which artefacts were the best in the museum, and she always replied that she could never decide on one, that everything from the first room to the last room was equally “the best”. During my first few days at the museum, Miss Cynthia did not talk much about Mr. Gerhard, often tearing up when his name was mentioned. In my last day or two in the museum, she started speaking about him. She only had good things to say about her previous boss and mentor. Reminiscing, she told me about one of their many conversations. Mr. Gerhard told her that one day he would not be around, and visitors would ask her about the artefacts, which was why she should remember the things he taught her every day. Miss Cynthia praised Mr. Gerhard for the personal advice and support he gave her throughout the years. Mr. Gerhard was “more than just an employer”. A few years ago, Miss Cynthia told me, Mr. Gerhard helped her with a family funeral; whenever she needed help, he was the one she knew she could turn to.

Miss Cynthia was proud of how far she had come and everything she knew from working with Mr. Gerhard. From her first day, Miss Cynthia said Mr. Gerhard started teaching her about the artefacts, he spent hours telling her about the artefacts, showing her which “stories” belonged to which artefacts and the manner in which she was to present herself in tours. Mr. Gerhard was responsible for the arrangement and display of the artefacts and

changed it as he saw fit. Miss Cynthia said that she did not make drastic changes to the arrangements and display unless she had permission or instructions from Mr. Gerhard. Mr. Gerhard also taught Miss Cynthia how to distinguish between artefacts that were readily available or could be reproduced and therefore could be sold, and those artefacts that could not be sold because of their rarity. Eventually, Mr. Gerhard also decided that she should accompany him on the field trips he took to look for and buy artefacts for his collection.

The nature of Mr. Gerhard's colonial collecting practice did not only inform his appropriation and display of objects, but also impacted on his relationships with people, most noticeably his relationship with Miss Cynthia. In this, Mr. Gerhard was the patriarch and Miss Cynthia his constant pupil, never to be admired for her own expertise or to gain autonomy. From the guided tour, I gained the impression that Miss Cynthia did not know much more than the names and uses of artefacts. However, when we spoke about the pot shard, she demonstrated extensive knowledge about the pots' specific markings and patterns, colouring and shades, but also about the "source communities" from which these pots originated. Having grown up in the area, Miss Cynthia knew a lot about the artefacts in the museum, but she based the majority of her descriptions in the guided tour on the narratives and descriptive information of the artefacts in Mr. Gerhard's narratives book which prevented her from demonstrating her own knowledge of the artefacts. Miss Cynthia revered Mr. Gerhard's methods and adhered to them after his death, sticking to the scripted tour. For her, knowing the scripted stories that accompanied each artefact and the museum tour off by heart was a hard-earned achievement because Mr. Gerhard parcelled out his knowledge about the artefacts over an extended period of time. She only received small "daily doses" of knowledge from him.

Autonomy was another deferred goal in the relationship between Mr. Gerhard and Miss Cynthia. Upon hiring her, Mr. Gerhard did not give her a job description with a set of duties she was to perform daily. Instead, he taught her how to perform her duties over time and in a deliberately slow manner with his constant guidance. Miss Cynthia described how he allowed her to take on more responsibilities in terms of the daily running of the museum over the years, like her ability to price and sell artefacts and to manage the museum while Mr. Gerhard was away. She said that in the beginning, when she just started working with him, she priced the artefacts under the guidance of Mr. Gerhard until he saw that she could do it independently. At first, Miss Cynthia said Mr. Gerhard used to spend more time in the museum overseeing and observing while she conducted tours. Only once Mr. Gerhard was satisfied with how she performed the duties he taught her one by one, did he grant her a greater degree of autonomy

and allow her to work independently. It was only in later years that Mr. Gerhard spent two to three hours in the museum daily. She spoke with deep appreciation of the time Mr. Gerhard dedicated to teaching her to eventually manage the museum and relay incoming request in his absence. It was, in Miss Cynthia's words, a question of trust, something she earned over time. In the museum she continued to conduct herself in accordance to his strict specifications, from cleaning the floors and glass cabinets to writing up receipts for artefacts sold- and sticking to his scripted tour.

The Gerhard Schneider Trust

Among the documents in Mr. Gerhard's personal file was several legal documents pertaining to his collection. In 2009, Mr. Gerhard registered his collection with the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) and stipulated that his registered collection formed part of the "Agri24 Group Collection". The Agri24 Group Collection consisted of Mr. Gerhard's museum collection and the private collections of two other individuals, both owners of one of South Africa's biggest farming conglomerates operating mainly in Limpopo, Agri24. Mr. Gerhard kept a copy of SAHRA's confirmation, and the application he sent to them. In 2017, Mr. Gerhard established the *Gerhard Schneider Trust* along with "friends and family to fund care of the collection" (Anon 2019e). The Trust had seven trustees including Mr. and Mrs Gerhard Schneider, Mr. Petrus and B. T. De Beers from Agri24 (see Chapter 3), and three others. Miss Cynthia said Mr. Gerhard chose Agri24 to manage the Trust because Agri24 was one of the private donors of the museum when Mr. Gerhard opened it in 1995.

I met Mr. Petrus from the Trust on my second day at the museum. In our conversation, Mr. Petrus said that he met Mr. Gerhard years ago and that they knew each other well. He said Mr. Gerhard had "connections" to Agri24 for many years before they met, which was why he approached Agri24 to help him preserve the museum and his collection in the form of a Trust. Mr. Petrus did not specify the parties who donated to the Trust nor the financial value of each donation. According to Fin24 (Anon 2015), the set-up costs of a Trust in South Africa, on average, is R7 500 depending on its complexity, and also required an annual fee of a similar amount if independent trustees were hired. Miss Cynthia commented that the Trust financed the museum, it paid their salaries and for any maintenance the museum building required. She said Mr. Gerhard established the Trust, rather than leaving the museum to the Greater Aranya Municipality because he did not trust that they would look after his legacy given his many run-

ins with them. Mr. Gerhard also did not want to leave the collection to his family because they were not interested in it. The Mr. Gerhard's had three children: Harry, Annie and Reagan. Harry became a university lecturer, Annie, an entomologist, while Reagan married and continued living in Aranya (Ettmayr 2014). Since none of them were interested in the museum or had personal stakes in it, Mr. Gerhard left the museum to the Trust to positively ensure that the museum remained open to the public after his death. The Trust would ensure that his legacy remained intact.

The Trust was evidently the final part of Mr. Gerhard self-assigned mission to preserve African cultural artefacts in the form of the Aranya Museum, yet the Trust also served to protect Mr. Gerhard's artefacts from "source communities" who may potentially lodge claims to the artefacts and request their reparation. Yet none of the trustees had the technical skills required to manage and grow a museum and to look after its artefacts. The future of the museum was dependent both on the (undetermined) managerial competencies of the trustees and the knowledge of the artefacts Miss Cynthia held as a result of Mr. Gerhard's teachings.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I showed how Mr. Gerhard's curating practice, his collection and his perception of 'African culture' was informed by a colonial collector mind-set. Mr. Gerhard's collecting practice resonated with colonial traditions of collecting, particularly seen in the vastness of his collection and in his drive to be as comprehensive as possible. He indiscriminately collected every kind of pot, sculptures of different people and animals, various sized drums and also all kinds of everyday utensils and weaponry from all 'African cultures' he encountered. Mr. Gerhard's colonial collector mentality was also seen in often repeated goal to preserve and protect 'African cultures' under threat of disappearing. Mr. Gerhard saw 'African cultures' as deteriorating and framed himself as a patriarch able and generously willing to preserve, protect and 'save' local material culture from the people from which he collected it- for their benefit. Contrary to modern practices of community involvement in museums, Mr. Gerhard was also the lone decision maker in the museum. He did not engage local source communities with regards to the museum's display nor the knowledge production processes involved in creating the exhibit. Yet, Mr. Gerhard imagine that the local people from who he collected would learn about their heritage from his collection, and that it had the potential to revive a lost culture. In this, Mr. Gerhard was an inheritor of an imperial tradition of collecting and displaying. I have

also shown how Mr. Gerhard's curating practice shaped his relationship to Miss Cynthia. Mr. Gerhard's patriarchal relationship and treatment of Miss Cynthia, most visible in his teaching techniques, was evidently rewarded as she became a custodian of his legacy.

As a collector inspired by a colonial tradition, Mr. Gerhard's exhibition was not entirely true to that tradition. However, his collecting style and practices, and the motivation that drove his collecting, resonated strongly with that of the German "salvage colonialism" project, which had at its core the mission to save and protect native cultures as they currently existed, and preserve the cultural heritage of those who cannot do it themselves for future generations. Yet, he did not have the space nor the resources for naturalistic displays and instead presented visitors with a display of artefacts from an undifferentiated Africa. As a member of the "museum community", Mr. Gerhard was also acutely aware of the changes in current museum practices in terms of curating and collecting and engagements with source communities. He therefore set up the *Gerhard Schneider Trust* to ensure the preservation and protection of his collection, but more importantly to ensure that source communities could not lodge claims on artefacts in his collection.

The next chapter will focus on the changes that occurred in the museum in the two months after Mr. Gerhard's death, particularly the shift in management from Mr. Gerhard to Mr. Petrus as one of the Trust's appointed trustees.

Chapter 3: A time of change

Introduction

Since its inception in 1995, the Aranya museum was closely tied to Mr. Gerhard's interests and personality. His death in early 2018 had an enormous impact on the life of the museum and set a whole range of artefacts and relationships in motion, within and outside the museum. Immediately after his death, the museum underwent significant changes as the *Gerhard Schneider Trust* took over the museum's management. The Trust's management immediately introduced another person to work in the museum, which unsettled the rhythm of daily life in the museum. Under the Trust's management, the future of Mr. Gerhard's collection, as a single entity, was also no longer guaranteed as prominent local, wealthy businessmen started to make decisions about preserving local artefacts in a political context driven by various tensions. Mr. Gerhard's death left the museum susceptible to be moulded according to these new interests and to a re-reading and re-appropriation of its artefacts. Yet as I show in this, and the following chapter, this re-reading and re-appropriation of Mr. Gerhard's collection occurred in specific local contexts and was directed towards very precise political purposes.

In this chapter I will look closely at the changes that took place in the museum after Mr. Gerhard's death and the implications of his museum's new management on the collection and relationships in the museum. This chapter will show how the positionality of new management impacted on the working relationships of actors in the museum and the museum's relationship to its source communities and artefacts. The chapter will also show how the positionality of this new management, and the local social and political environment in which it operated, influenced their instrumental attempt to claim the museum for local political battles, which was different from the local politics in which Mr. Gerhard operated.

Seeing the changes

In February 2019 when I arrived at the museum for my second research visit, Miss Cynthia and a young woman who introduced herself as Miss Triphinia greeted me in the reception area. In the numerous phone conversations I had had with Miss Cynthia during the previous week, she did not mention that Miss Triphinia had joined her at the museum but made sure that before I showed up, I would get Mrs Schneider's permission to revisit the museum. I dutifully called Mrs Schneider, who kindly told me that she had no direct involvement with the museum.

Nevertheless, she said that I was welcome to visit the museum and that Miss Cynthia would be the best person to help me while I was there.

At first, Miss Cynthia seemed apprehensive about my presence in the museum. She took me on the same tour as in my previous visit, but I slowly realised that the museum looked slightly different. As in my previous visit, the museum was still crowded with artefacts, but their display was somehow neater and more orderly. Whereas artefacts were still rather haphazardly piled into glass cabinets, the animal figurines and statues of one sculptor were now grouped together and stood next to a group by another sculptor. The pots were arranged according to size and colour with most of the older pots grouped together on the lower shelves of the cabinets, the mortars and pestles were arranged according to their size as smaller ones were placed neatly in front of larger ones in a corner of the weaponry and utensils room. In the same room the spoons and jugs also now hung in increasing sizes along the walls.

After the tour, I asked Miss Cynthia and Miss Triphinia if I could ask questions about the changes I noticed in the museum. Miss Triphinia readily answered my questions about their daily work routines, but when it came to questions about the artefacts, she deferred questions to Miss Cynthia who was "still teaching [her] about them". When it came to questions about the museum, Miss Cynthia answered with ease but, swallowing, said that she was not yet ready to talk about Mr. Gerhard.

Changing the topic, I asked what they knew about the trust that Mr. Gerhard had arranged prior to his death. Miss Cynthia shrugged. Miss Triphinia suddenly looked away, and after brooding for a bit, announced that she will call "Mr. Petrus". We went to retrieve her cell phone from the office and while scrolling down her contacts list, Miss Triphinia explained that Mr. Petrus was one of the trustees. Mr. Petrus did not answer her call. While Miss Triphinia tried to contact Mr. Petrus again, Miss Cynthia had gone quiet. She did not move from the pots room where we had our discussion. I left the office to sit next to Miss Cynthia but she seemed distracted and deep in thought. An hour later, Mr. Petrus called Miss Triphinia to arrange a meeting with me.

The following morning, while waiting for Mr. Petrus to arrive, Miss Triphinia and I passed the time talking on the veranda. I could tell that she was not eager to talk about the museum or the artefacts until Mr. Petrus arrived. Mr. Petrus was a huge white Afrikaans man and entered the museum with the authority of someone in charge. He introduced himself as both one of the trustees of the *Gerhard Schneider Trust* and spokesperson for Agri24. The thin

man who accompanied him was called Willie and was head of security at Agri24. They greeted "Dorothy" with familiarity and Willie invited her to have coffee with them. Miss Cynthia saw my confusion, and informed me that "Dorothy" was Miss Triphinia's English name. Mr. Petrus insisted that all of us, Miss Cynthia and Miss Triphinia included, should take a seat around the reception desk to "avoid any confusion". Before I could get a word in, Mr. Petrus started talking about the trust. Pointing to Miss Triphinia and Miss Cynthia, he said that as museum guides, they protected the trust's "assets", namely the artefacts in the museum. Mr. Petrus also mentioned the municipality's continued lack of involvement in the museum after Mr. Gerhard's death, despite a meeting he had with them regarding the possibility of a formal rental agreement of the museum's premises. Mr. Petrus said he was aware that the municipality assisted Mr. Gerhard in starting the museum, but "now it's different… we don't want anything as a free handout". At the time of my research Mr. Petrus was still waiting on a response from the municipality on this matter. We spoke further about my research in the museum and Mr. Petrus insisted that Mr. Gerhard's files and the museum's catalogues were available to me, indicating to Miss Cynthia to show me.

Miss Cynthia was quiet throughout the discussion but just before Mr. Petrus left, she timidly informed him that I intended to speak to members of the Modjadji family. Mr. Petrus told Miss Cynthia that he did not mind that I speak to the family, but sternly added that the trust would not return any items in the museum to them. I was taken aback by Miss Cynthia's statement and once Dryer had left, I asked her why she worried about me talking to the Modjadji family. She calmly explained that "people" might question the provenance of Mr. Gerhard's collection. I could not get more out of her but knew that this was her roundabout way to signal that she knew about potential claims on the museum and that she wanted to protect Mr. Gerhard's legacy.

The trust, Agri24 and local farming

In our conversation, Mr. Petrus did not feel it necessary to explain to me what Agri24 referred to. I had to Google it. Agri24 was a multimillion-rand farming conglomerate that had operated on farms in the area since 1880. The company operated on farms from Aranya to Mooketsi, Politsi, Polokwane, and Musina in the Limpopo Province. In these areas, Agri24 focused mainly on cultivating tomatoes and avocados. They also operated farms in many other parts of Namibia and South Africa, including the Western and Eastern Cape, where they grew mangoes,

onions, cherries, dates, stone- and other fruit, and vegetables (Anon 2019f). Agri24 was one of the largest employers in the region, employing around 8 000 workers, with 6 500 of them working on farms in Limpopo. In 2014, *News24* highlighted that Agri24 treated its workforce with "respect and [was] devoted to its employees"; the company built small villages for their workers and their families near farms, established clinics in villages, and provided bus services for workers' children to and from the nearest primary schools and crèches (Anon 2013; Anon 2014a).

From the early 2000s, however, local and national news outlets placed Agri24 under increased scrutiny as disputes with workers became ever more prominent. In 2003, wage disputes between Agri24 management and workers reached a breaking point. The company dismissed 2000 workers and evicted tenants from their farm homes over an illegal strike. Sympathetic journalists wrote of the workers that they were "huddled in trucks and forced off the farm" (Hlangani 2003). When Agri24 refused to reinstate the dismissed workers, the matter was brought before the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) for resolution (Hlangani 2003).

Although this event seemed uniquely brutal and affected a large number of workers, tensions between farmers and farm tenants and -workers were widespread across the Limpopo province. As James (2011: 8) showed, farmers in the region evicted many tenants and farm-dwelling workers from farms, often because workers and tenants lodged claims against farm-owners to the land on which they once lived and worked, and considered home. When farm workers and tenants were not evicted or retrenched out-right, they were subjected to more subtle pressures that led to their displacement. According to Evers, Seagle and Krijtenburg (2013: 119), aside from offering tenants small sums of money to leave, farmers terminated many services such as transportation, and closed off physical access to the farms through new fencing and digital gates. More directly, they also demolished farmworkers' homes on the farms. Such wide-scale evictions and displacement of farm workers and tenants, and the ensuing claims for land redistribution and reform, led to the rise of so-called brokers. These brokers, who acted as representatives or intermediaries, gained the status of broker based on their access to economic and/or political resources, while others mediated between such actors and those lower down the social hierarchy. Brokers bridged these separate environments while also deriving benefits from the resultant separation (James 2011: 2).

As part of the post-apartheid land dispute claims and restitution processes, Agri24 has been at the centre of many land claim disputes. Since the future ownership of these farms were disputed, owners often withdrew capital investments on such farms and did not want to risk crops for which they might not be compensated (Whitbread et al 2011: 439). White farm owners often complained that properties subject to land claims were also prone to more incidences of theft and vandalism from claimants frustrated by the long restitution process, or by criminals taking advantage of the unstable management and operation of the farm (Hay 2015: 266). On the other hand, where land claims had successfully been settled, land claimants were not given capital to set up commercial farming or to fix neglected farms (Hay 2015: 265). This was the case with the Mmamahlola community in Aranya. The fruit farm, from which the community was forcibly removed in 1958, was now a "genuine wasteland" but was "successfully returned" after a 17 year restitution process (Mahlakoana 2018).

In 2019, various news outlets reported that Agri24 had flattened 85 graves to make way for new avocado farms (Ramothwala 2019). Eight Limpopo families accused Agri24 of desecrating their relatives' graves which were on the Mooketsi and Modjadjiskloof farms. The families complained that they could not "perform their rituals on the graves of their loved ones because Agri24 destroyed them" (Ramothwala 2019). In a context where tensions between white farmers and "local communities" of farm workers and tenants were already high, such accusations underlined the perception that Agri24 was disrespectful towards local communities and their cultural heritage and had little regard for their overall wellbeing.

As the spokesperson for Agri24, Mr. Petrus was a prominent figure in the Aranya agricultural and business sector. He was also keenly aware of the strained relationships between farmers and local communities in the area and of the restitution claims being made on farms the firm managed. In this respect, Mr. Petrus's concerns seemed to have overlapped with those of Mr. Gerhard. In our conversation about the museum and the Trust, Mr. Petrus commented that Mr. Gerhard was extremely worried that the local community would lay claim to items in the museum, which was why he had formed the Trust. Mr. Petrus further explained that he was aware that "people" laid claim to items in the museum but was adamant that the Trust would not return any items to any party who laid claim to it. The Trust was a non-profit organisation whose sole objective was to preserve Mr. Gerhard's collection. Miss Cynthia and "Dorothy" had to "guard" the museum's "assets" and they were responsible for the museum's daily operations. Mr. Petrus insisted that the museum was managed as it was under Mr. Gerhard's tenure, with the significant difference that the trust now "financed" the museum.

Throughout our conversation, Mr. Petrus spoke about the museum as a corporate entity with hundreds of cultural "assets" that he had to protect from people attempting to claim some sort of ownership over them. He did not name the threatening "people" but in Aranya where land claims stemmed from black communities, and where he was responsible for an ethnology museum, it was clear whom Mr. Petrus had in mind when he spoke about the threat to the museum. It is perhaps telling of his fears of an imminent threat to the museum that Mr. Petrus brought his head of security, Mr. Willie, to a meeting with a stranger asking about the museum and its trust.

Well-aware of these local dynamics, Miss Cynthia saw a way to curry favour with her new 'boss' by following Miss Triphinia's lead, informing him of my intention to talk to the Modjadji family, a likely claimant family. But Mr. Petrus was a worldly man and knew that he could not prevent me from speaking to them. He merely warned me that the Trust would fight any claims on the museum.

Source communities and museum claims

Mr. Petrus's attitude towards the hypothetical claims made on artefacts in the Aranya Museum contrasted with a growing trend for museums to engage, consult and incorporate "source communities" and their descendants in the management of ethnological museum collections (Peers & Brown 2005: 2). In this trend, source community members were defined as authorities of their own "cultures" and the representations of their material heritage; they also had a legitimate moral and cultural stake in museum artefacts and had special claims to their material culture currently held by museums. According to Peers and Brown (2015: 1-2), this represented a significant change in curatorial practices and the display of material cultures and artefacts. The relationship between museums and source communities saw artefacts and information about historic artefacts returned to source communities, and community members working with museums in ascertaining the continued meaning of artefacts (Peers & Brown, 2005: 1). Across the world, museums have begun to consider source communities as important audiences for exhibitions and how such exhibitions affect communities. This engagement with source communities was clearly seen in the District Six Museum in Cape Town where community members, who used to reside in and were forcefully removed from District Six, were encouraged to identify and directly tag areas of significance such as homes or bars on an actual map of the old District Six area exhibited by the museum (Nanda 2004: 384). Visitors

reconstructed their memories and personalised a public space by interacting with and adding onto the exhibit. District Six community members not only became active participants in the formation of the exhibitions, but were also employed as staff within the museum (Nanda 2004: 384; Rankin & Hamilton 1999: 9).

Older museums in South Africa had a more complicated relationship to "source communities". Shortly after the end of apartheid, in 1996, the South African Iziko Museum came under widespread criticism for their large collection of indigenous human remains, much of it unethically collected (Legassick & Rassool 2000: 8; Skotnes 1996: 72). South African activists and source communities increasingly put forth demands for the reparation and reburial of such remains. In 2004, Iziko commissioned consultations with descendant communities, activists and museum professionals with regards to the restitution of unethically acquired human remains to descendant communities. Originally, there were 15 cases but by 2016 this had expanded to 115 cases (Schramm 2016: 134). While much of the Iziko controversy was about human remains, the museum also faced accusations by source communities and academics that its depictions of South Africa's indigenous peoples were dehumanising, derogatory and static (Schramm 2016: 132).

Iziko was not the only museum that was confronted by descendant or source communities over its collections and curatorial practices. Over more than 20 years, a number of museums in South Africa were confronted by demands for restitution, the return of human remains and cultural artefacts from indigenous communities. Indigenous communities based their demands for restitution on claims of ancestral decent to the human remains and cultural artefacts held in museums, among them the Prestwich Memorial in Cape Town and the Hermanus town museum (Schramm 2016: 134, 136, 138). Today, many museums in South Africa engage with source and descendant communities with regards to museum exhibitions and the considerations surrounding reparations of museum items, often because of heavy political pressure that source communities bring to bear on such museums (Bakare 2019; Schramm 2016).

It was evident from the conversation with Mr. Petrus that the Aranya museum would not conform to these wider trends. Indeed, Mr. Petrus made it clear that potential reparations claims on the Aranya Museum's artefacts would not be entertained and that he had no intention of engaging with source communities or claimants with regards to the museum's exhibitions and artefacts. Mr. Petrus's main concern was to protect and preserve the Trust's "assets", a

collection that consisted of objects collected from black people in Aranya, its surrounding villages and more far-off regions. As Mr. Gerhard intended, the collection reflected the material cultural traditions of people in the region- but was held in an educational trust for people, but more particularly the youth who he considered particularly at risk of losing their cultural heritage (see Chapter 2). Given Agri24's difficult relationship with the local community, there was certainly some cultural capital for Mr. Petrus- and Agri24- in the acquisition and 'protection' of the locals' material culture and heritage.

Their acquisition of the museum and its artefacts was an explicit and instrumental claim on the local museum and the cultural capital embedded in it for the purpose of gaining clout in local political battles. However, the local politics that drove Mr. Petrus' acquisition of the museum and his mobilisation of its artefacts is very different from the politics and motivations that inspired Mr. Gerhard's tenure in the museum.

Mr. Gerhard's legacy

In later conversations with Miss Cynthia about the museum and its future, she was always very protective of Mr. Gerhard's legacy which she believed to be embedded in his artefacts, his files and his personal belongings in the museum. Mr. Petrus was less concerned about protecting Mr. Gerhard's legacy, and had no reservations about giving me permission to access Mr. Gerhard's personal documents and files. Miss Cynthia was a lot more hesitant and did not want to talk about Mr. Gerhard's sourcing of artefacts or his justification for housing them in the museum.

A few days after Mr. Petrus's visit, I asked Miss Cynthia if I could see Mr. Gerhard's documents and files that Mr. Petrus spoke of. Miss Cynthia shook her head, saying that Mr. Gerhard did not show his files or "narratives book" to journalists or any student that interviewed him. Apologetically, she explained that Mr. Gerhard would not have wanted me to see his narratives book because he spent so much time and effort compiling it, which made him very protective of it. Miss Cynthia said that she did not feel comfortable showing me his narratives book and files but that I could see the museum catalogues.

Miss Cynthia went to the office and came out with four of the thickest files I have ever seen. She dropped them onto the reception desk, and I took them to the pots room. I immediately started going through the first file. After a while, Miss Cynthia came to sit next to

me. She watched me page through the file until we got to an illustrated page that was entirely covered in pencil scribbles. Miss Cynthia told me that Miss Triphinia had made the notes and that they were of the descriptions and stories that Miss Cynthia told when visitors viewed the artefact illustrated on the page. As I was about to read Miss Triphinia's notes, Miss Cynthia took the file. She did not want me to read the "story". She turned the pages a couple of times, but only long enough for me to see the illustrations, not for me to read Miss Triphinia's notes. Miss Cynthia remarked that some of Miss Triphinia's stories were not the same as the narratives in Mr. Gerhard's book that she kept under lock and key. When Miss Cynthia was done paging through the first file, and I was reaching for the second file, she asked me why I wanted to look at them all as the files were all the same. To prove the point, she took the second file and vigorously flipped through its pages. I asked her if the third and fourth files were also the same. Frustrated, she said that they were. Not wanting to ruffle her feathers any further, I thanked Miss Cynthia for showing me the files. She piled the files on top of one another again and carried them to the office.

Talking to Miss Cynthia about the museum, it became clear that she did not think that individual objects had any value independent from Mr. Gerhard's "collection". For her, the artefacts, their descriptions and the "stories" that went with each object were inseparable parts of Mr. Gerhard's legacy. For example, Miss Cynthia told me a story of what looked like a child's toy. She said,

> [These] dolls are made from clay. They say whenever a Sotho girl comes back form initiation school they give her this doll as a gift because in the initiation school they believe that they teach girls how to take care of her husband and how to teach [children]. So if you conceive, after you give birth to a child you have to break this doll, take the beads and make a new bracelet for you child. So if you don't have a child, you have to take this doll to a traditional healer, [and] the traditional healer will help you conceive… Then you have to sleep with this doll. In the morning the elders come and check the doll. If the doll is broken it simply means she has slept on it so you are not ready to be a parent because you can sleep on top of your child.

Such "stories" were typical of the narratives and bits of information that Mr. Gerhard had assembled about the artefacts in his collection. They spoke about the original use or significance of the artefacts as singular items. This "inherent emphasis of museums on the original" (Varutti 2018: 43) created an aura of authenticity in Mr. Gerhard's collection and Miss Cynthia, who did not veer off Mr. Gerhard's narrative of 'the original', reiterated this authenticity with stories like the one about the fertility doll. Price (2013: 138) argued that the

authentication of objects "can only take place in attributions, labels, and stories about the objects, not in the objects themselves". In her adherence to Mr. Gerhard's origin stories, Miss Cynthia saw the artefacts as directly tied to fixed descriptions of their origins, not as things that were social or relational as suggested by Appadurai (2006).

Miss Cynthia was certain that her usefulness and relevance to the 'new' museum depended on her knowledge of Mr. Gerhard's narratives. She was not prepared to simply hand over her most significant resource and purposefully protected Mr. Gerhard's narratives from those she deemed undeserving or threatening. When she was certain that I was just a student interested in the museum, Miss Cynthia allowed me a glimpse into Mr. Gerhard's personal file and documents yet still refused to let me see Mr. Gerhard's narratives book. As soon as I became interested in Miss Triphinia's stories and bits of information in the museum's catalogue, my access was quickly cut off. Miss Cynthia decided that the information about the artefacts, whether written by Mr. Gerhard or Miss Triphinia, was off limits to me.

Miss Triphinia on the other hand, worked in the museum and should have had access to Mr. Gerhard's narratives book because they were central to the official tour. However, Miss Triphinia had never seen Mr. Gerhard's narratives book because Miss Cynthia had not shown it to her. Miss Triphinia's access to Mr. Gerhard's legacy thus depended on the rate at which Miss Cynthia parcelled out bits of information, often quite calculated. She only told Miss Triphinia enough to enable her to conduct a tour but then did not correct Miss Triphinia's written descriptions when they differed from those in Mr. Gerhard's narratives book. Miss Triphinia, however, worked around this obstacle and found other means to access the knowledge she needed to conduct what was considered a successful tour. She was resourceful and made furtive notes when Miss Cynthia conducted public tours.

Later that day, I asked Miss Triphinia about the notes she had made in the museum's catalogues. She said that she made them for her personal reference, to help her remember the "stories" or descriptions that Miss Cynthia gave during the tour. She admitted that she had never seen Mr. Gerhard's narratives book. Besides the stories and descriptions she learnt from Miss Cynthia, Miss Triphinia said that she remembered other stories and description from her childhood because some of the artefacts in the museum were also everyday items in her grandmother's house, like the mortar and pestle. For the remaining artefacts, she only knew their names and admitted that on tours she would either make up a likely story for the item or

just provide visitors with a name for the object. This was very different from Miss Cynthia's relationship to these objects.

Miss Triphinia assigned meanings and descriptions to artefacts during tours based on her interactions with them, prior to, as well as while working in the museum. She embedded her own narratives of the artefacts into the tours, guided by her personal experiences and her imagination, and at times specifically guided by different audiences. Miss Triphinia's perception of the artefacts resonated closely with Appadurai's (1986: 5) notion that "human actors encode things with significance" as they interact with them. Miss Triphinia regarded the artefacts as having relationships to people, including herself and her audience, that were subject to change. Appadurai (2006: 15) further argued that the properties of social relations were embedded in the human transaction that surrounded things. Practically, "today's gift is tomorrow's commodity. Yesterday's commodity is tomorrow's found art object" (Appadurai 2006: 15). The meaning Miss Triphinia inscribed onto the artefacts were social and fluid, and sourced from her relationships and transactions with people and with things. Unlike Miss Cynthia, who perceived the artefacts as physical embodiments of Mr. Gerhard's legacy, and therefore in the tours recited "facts" and "stories" from Mr. Gerhard's narratives book, Miss Triphinia's approach to the artefacts and the tour differed significantly.

Nine to five in the museum

Miss Cynthia's professional conduct could be read in terms of what Scott (1985: 241) dubbed as "garden variety" or "routine" forms of resistance in his study of peasant resistance in a small Malaysian farming village. Scott (1985: xvi) identified patterns of subtle resistance, such as foot dragging, false compliance and feigned ignorance that those in relatively powerless positions employed in the face of confrontation with powerful authorities. Instead of opting for open and collective forms of resistance such as an outright confrontation, they made use of less overt strategies to resist their superiors and other authorities. Miss Cynthia 'dragged her feet' as she taught Miss Triphinia the narratives and descriptions that were required for the tour, 'feigned ignorance' when looking at Miss Triphinia's incorrect descriptions in the museum catalogue, and she acted with 'false compliance' when she agreed to Mr. Petrus's decision to allow me access to all Mr. Gerhard files, books and documents. And yet she conducted herself in a manner that did not, in the slightest, allude to her disregard for the actions and decisions of her new employers. Scott (1985: 292) would identify her actions as incidental activities; as

opposed to real resistance. As such, her activities were unorganised, opportunistic and self-indulgent, and did not result in revolutionary changes in her work environment. Miss Cynthia did not employ overt forms of resistance because it risked jeopardising her only employment (Scott 1985: 278). But as Scott (1985: xvi, 242) noted, her behaviour was motivated by great desperation.

In many senses, Miss Cynthia's behaviour was testament to her resistance to the changing structure and operational procedures occurring in the museum. After sixteen years of working under Mr. Gerhard, Miss Cynthia now worked for Mr. Petrus and the remaining trustees. Miss Triphinia's entry into the museum was a consequence of the shift to this new management. However, in the days after Mr. Petrus's visit, Miss Cynthia quietly mentioned that she did not know the seven trustees, or Mr. Petrus, because they had yet to introduce themselves to her. It was clear from Miss Cynthia's behaviour that she was unfamiliar with the expectations and preferences of the new management. Her initial surprised reaction to Miss Triphinia's insistence on contacting Mr. Petrus when I visited the museum, hinted at a changed regime. In contrast to Mr. Gerhard's tenure, employees on site now had to refer to outside authorities but at the same time had to work in a more independent environment where they were given more autonomy. Whereas Mr. Gerhard was at the museum on a daily basis, Mr. Petrus only came when he was called upon.

In this new environment, Miss Triphinia was slowly becoming the primary employee. Miss Triphinia's decisions, like contacting Mr. Petrus, had more impact on the museum's daily running than Miss Cynthia's decisions relating to the narratives and descriptions of the museum's artefacts. Miss Triphinia's call to Mr. Petrus allowed her to dictate how my re-entrance to the museum would be constructed and negotiated, a much more effective strategy than Miss Cynthia's denial of access to bits of files. Miss Triphinia also had historical ties to Mr. Petrus and Agri24, which gave her more leverage and influence than Miss Cynthia.

Miss Triphinia was a Balobedu woman in her late thirties who lived with her family in Modjadjiskloof. She started working at the Aranya Museum in January 2019 shortly after Mr. Gerhard passed away. Within a few months, Miss Triphinia quickly learnt the ropes and became a capable museum guide. Mr. Petrus had assigned Miss Triphinia to work in the museum to assist Miss Cynthia who was working alone at the time. Before coming to work at the museum, Miss Triphinia worked for Agri24 for eight years as a trainer and security guard instructor. Mr. Petrus was her direct boss and she had first-hand experience of his managerial

style. Due to her long-standing work relationship with Mr. Petrus, Miss Triphinia had more clout in the new dispensation and was trusted to make independent decisions on Mr. Petrus's behalf- such as recognising potential threats to his assets. Unlike Miss Cynthia who could only speak Tsonga and English, Miss Triphinia was proficient in Tsonga, Sotho, English, and Balobedu. She also studied Business Management through Agri24, and attended classes for two days a month. With Miss Triphinia not at work on those days, Mr. Petrus arranged for another woman to assist Miss Cynthia in the museum. On days that Miss Triphinia attended classes, Miss Cynthia conducted all the tours.

Over the course of my time spent in the museum, I noticed that Miss Cynthia increasingly referred to Mr. Gerhard's memory whenever she justified her behaviour or criticised Miss Triphinia's behaviour, often saying "Mr. Gerhard would not like that", or "Mr. Gerhard wanted it that way". The breadth of things and behaviours that Mr. Gerhard had opinions on, as evidenced in Miss Cynthia's frequent references, painted a picture of a very pedantic man - and of a very loyal assistant who could not steer off his prescriptions. On many occasions, I asked Miss Cynthia questions in order to elicit minor pieces of information about Mr. Gerhard. But only on a few of those occasions did I get any answers from her because she was so guarded on this topic. It was only in my final days at the museum that she began to speak freely about Mr. Gerhard, retelling his "stories" and gushing about how she enjoyed assisting him over the years. In telling me these stories, she attempted to portray the depth of her relationship to Mr. Gerhard, yet also, and more importantly, the integral part she played in upholding Mr. Gerhard preferences, procedures and prescriptions in the museum after his death. Although I did not doubt Miss Cynthia's dedication to Mr. Gerhard's legacy, his memory and their relationship became central in the ways that she adapted to the changed management of the museum.

Miss Cynthia's authoritarian policing of Mr. Gerhard's narratives could be seen as her final attempt to secure her position in this new working environment where Miss Triphinia had more leverage and influence. Miss Triphinia was becoming ever more suited and equipped to work in the museum. Her professional approach and proficiency were clear signs of her desire to move up in her new working environment, which in turn had the potential to threaten the central role Miss Cynthia had occupied in the museum. Miss Triphinia's experience working for Agri24, her familiar relationship to Mr. Petrus, her proficiency in multiple languages allowing her to successfully engage with a wider range of people and her current enrolment in

a Business Management course all made her a viable choice to work in the museum and possibly manage it.

This was particularly clear on one quiet day at the start of my second week at the museum in February 2019. Miss Cynthia and I were sitting in the weaponry and utensils room of the museum, talking about museums in Cape Town because she asked me what they were like. I was still rambling on about the museums when a white, middle-aged man walked into the museum. He looked like a man with a purpose, notebook and pen in hand. He greeted Miss Cynthia and Miss Triphinia, and introduced himself to me as Mr. Daniel. He said that he had spoken to Mr. Petrus the previous day about plans to restructure the museum, and needed to take more photographs. Miss Cynthia looked startled at this news but Mr. Daniel asked her to show him the "Modjadji artefacts". Subdued, Miss Cynthia complied, showing him the Modjadji artefacts moving from the drums room, where most of the Modjadji artefact were displayed, to the pots room and then in the weaponry and utensil room (see Chapter 2). After seeing the Modjadji artefacts, Mr. Daniel looked around asking Miss Cynthia if the museum had similar artefacts of "different cultures" that he could use to "create narratives incorporating different cultures". Miss Cynthia looked confused and turned to Miss Triphinia who then whispered something to her in Tsonga. Miss Cynthia immediately relaxed. She turned back to Mr. Daniel and promptly showed him two drinking pots carved to resemble women's breasts. Mr. Daniel asked for more such examples. Miss Cynthia at first appeared to be out of her depth, but quickly regained her composure as she took Mr. Daniel through the rest of the museum.

Mr. Daniel made it clear that Mr. Petrus gave him the authority to be in the museum and instructed Miss Cynthia to assist him in making sense of the artefacts and how they related to one another. Watching Miss Cynthia interact with Mr. Daniel, I noticed that Miss Cynthia spoke confidently about the narratives Mr. Gerhard had taught her, but when asked to think of an alternative narrative that could possibly relate different artefacts to one another, she struggled. Miss Triphinia, on the other hand, clearly grasped what Mr. Daniel was asking, and quickly relayed this to Miss Cynthia. After several more of Mr. Daniel's questions and Miss Cynthia's explanations, he started directing his questions at Miss Triphinia, looking in-between her and Miss Cynthia as he asked the questions.

Later that day, a young black couple walked into the museum wanting to go on a tour. It was Miss Cynthia's turn to take the tour. She led them to the weaponry and utensils room as she began the tour. When they got to the figurines room, and while the couple was looking at

the various figurines, smaller sculptures, and the headrests and masks, Miss Cynthia called Miss Triphinia. She laughingly said that because the couple spoke Sotho, she could not give the tour and asked Miss Triphinia to continue. Back at reception, Miss Cynthia remarked that they preferred to give tours in their visitors' language, whether English, Tsonga or Sotho.

Miss Cynthia's obvious reliance on Miss Triphinia in professional interactions, whether it was assisting Miss Cynthia in answering visitors' questions, translating a question into more understandable terms for her, or continuing a tour in a visitor's preferred language, would not only diminish her standing in the museum in relation to Miss Triphinia, but may also drive her to seek alternative ways of maintaining her position as custodian of Mr. Gerhard's legacy. Additionally, the likelihood that the narratives may change because of Mr. Daniel's potential involvement with the museum could be a daunting possibility that Miss Cynthia would have to face if she hoped to continue working in the museum. With this possibility on the table, the narratives and information of the artefacts that Miss Cynthia held dear might become obsolete and her position in the museum even more so.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined the change in management in the Aranya Museum, from being managed and curated by Mr. Gerhard to being under the purview of the Trust and managed by Mr. Petrus. As a prominent figure in Aranya's agricultural and business sector, and now also the managerial trustee of the museum, Mr. Petrus was well aware of the local conditions under which he came to manage the museum and the affordances he gained from controlling or owning the Aranya Museum's representation of local black people's cultural materials and objects. In the local context of Aranya, with heightened land claim and worker disputes mainly on behalf of Aranya's black communities, and Agri24's unpopular positionality with regards to these disputes, Mr. Petrus's assumed management of the museum can be considered a strategic political move. Managing a museum of artefacts sourced from local black source communities afforded him the cultural capital that accompanied his association the Aranya Museums artefacts, and additionally provided him an opportunity to curry favour from the museum's source communities, the very same people at the centre of land claim and worker disputes.

This chapter also showed how this shift in management affected the working relationship of actors in the museum and also how the artefacts were viewed and how meaning

was inscribed onto the artefacts. Miss Cynthia perceived the artefacts as having an aura of authenticity that was part of and stemmed from Mr. Gerhard's legacy. Miss Triphinia, on the other hand, did not perceive the artefacts as fixed to Mr. Gerhard's legacy, instead she saw the artefacts as having social lives where meaning is continually inscribed on them and influenced by their transactions with visitors that encounter them.

With Mr. Petrus as the museum's new boss, Miss Triphinia and Miss Cynthia found themselves, and their actions and decisions influenced by bigger social networks and local controls radiating from local businesses like Agri24. Before, Mr. Gerhard was the sole authority in the museum and his decisions had a small range of impact on both the artefacts and on Miss Cynthia. Miss Cynthia was thus less aware of the local controls and influences of Agri24, unlike Miss Triphinia who was well-aware of such influences due to her prior work experience for Agri24. Miss Triphinia could therefore knowingly act in accordance with Mr. Petrus's work procedures and preferences. The pathos of Miss Cynthia's predicament was clearly visible in how she responded to Miss Triphinia's entrance into the museum, and in how she reiterated her role as custodian and protector of Mr. Gerhard legacy.

In the next chapter I will look at one possible future of the Aranya Museum as Mr. Gerhard's collection attracted the interest of a wealthy local. He admitted that he was fascinated by the scope of Mr. Gerhard's collection long before his death yet could not successfully involve himself in the museum due to Mr. Gerhard's authoritarian and difficult demeanour. Mr. Gerhard's death then left the museum and its artefacts open to being appropriated by this wealthy local who, as we shall see, had transformative plans for the museum's current location and display of artefacts.

Chapter 4: Mr. Daniel Hilton-Barber

Introduction

After Mr. Gerhard's death, this relatively invisible museum attracted much attention from powerful local interests who stood to benefit from the museum's symbolic capital in a context of fraught political relationships with the museum's "source communities" (see Chapter 3). Perhaps less immediately instrumental, the museum also became attractive to a member of a wealthy local family with a well-established family farm. This man's proposals for the museum's future mobilised his family's imagined belonging in a context where "source communities" increasingly questioned white land ownership in the area. But as an individual project, the plans for the museum also reflected his collector identity and wider patterns of status-seeking in which small museums on private farms in South Africa have become a fashionable sign of distinction in the Bourdieusian sense.

This chapter will focus on Mr. Daniel Hilton-Barber, a man we met in the previous chapter, and his desire to establish a link between himself and the artefacts of the Aranya Museum. Mr. Daniel Hilton-Barber was a local rich man interested in constructing a museum of his own using a portion of the Aranya Museum's artefacts. This chapter will examine Mr. Daniel's role in the museum after Mr. Gerhard's passing and the implications of acquiring the artefacts and housing them at his family home, Victoria-Chambers Boutique Hotel. This chapter will show how Mr. Daniel's attempt to house the artefacts at Victoria-Chambers Boutique Hotel was also an attempt at acquiring cultural capital, which would in turn have elevated the touristic status of the hotel and the Hilton-Barber family.

A notable man

I met Mr. Daniel on 14 March 2019 when he visited the museum to make an inventory of its holdings (see Chapter 3). On that occasion, Mr. Daniel eagerly explained how he wanted to invest his time and energy into the museum; he wanted the museum's trustees to help with the refurbishment of the museum, to look into other locations for it and also to look into alternative means of generating cultural tourism in Aranya. When I asked about the purpose of his visit, and the photographs he took, Mr. Daniel explained that he wanted to "get a grip of what is in the museum". He wanted to find "narratives or themes" that could be "threaded" across the "cultures" featured in the museum. He hoped to create "preliminary narratives" that would

connect the artefacts from different cultures represented in the museum. His visit was the first step in formulating a proposal for Mr. Petrus, a man he knew very well.

As he left, Mr. Daniel invited me to Victoria-Chambers Boutique Hotel, his family farm on the outskirts of Aranya. He explained that this estate, with its old stone buildings near the hotel's parking lot, might be an alternative location for all, or at least a portion, of the artefacts in the museum. He already had a name for this re-imagined museum, the "Limpopo Museum of Magic". Mr. Daniel obviously had major plans for the museum, and I decided to have a follow-up interview with him about this.

On the 2nd of April 2019 we met at *The Company's Garden Restaurant* in Cape Town at 11h00, roughly a month after we met in Aranya. We settled into our seats and ordered coffee and sandwiches. While we waited, Mr. Daniel introduced himself and explained a bit of his background. He was a white man aged 61 who grew up in the Aranya area. He attended boarding school in Johannesburg and spent holidays with his grandmother at Victoria-Chambers Boutique Hotel, which was a timber farm at the time. He had a degree in journalism and fine arts and during South Africa's transition period toward democracy, he moved to Cape Town where he joined *Cape Talk Radio* and became a political editor for the radio station. He then established his own publishing business, *Art Publishers*, which published books on South Africa's natural history and wildlife. Mr. Daniel recently sold his business and was thinking of returning to Aranya and his family home to establish "a connection" to the collections and artefacts housed in the Aranya Museum.

Mr. Daniel came across Mr. Gerhard's collection for the first time when he visited the museum in 2012 or 2013. He said that he was "blown away" by the depth and extent of the collection as it contained artefacts from the Congo, Nigeria, and most importantly, local artefacts from various cultures from the region and the rest of South Africa. When I asked him why he was interested in Mr. Gerhard's collection in particular, he said that he had always been interested in the history and material culture of the area and that this collection reflected that interest. At the time, Mr. Daniel approached Mr. Gerhard to buy the collection and immediately started making plans to secure funding for this new venture. However, due to Mr. Gerhard's increasingly difficult demeanour and because Mr. Daniel was side-tracked by his own business in Cape Town, his plans to purchase Mr. Gerhard's collection at that point fell apart.

Almost seven years later, Mr. Daniel said that he was "revisiting the past". Mr. Gerhard's collection, which had always been at the back of his mind as an unresolved issue,

was in disarray. The museum was less structured than he remembered from his previous visits as more artefacts were brought in and the space available for the artefacts had dwindled. He remembered a museum that was a lot busier with more foot traffic. After Mr. Gerhard's death, Mr. Daniel decided to enquire about the museum's future. When he spoke to Miss Cynthia about the museum's apparent decline, it was obvious that she was not in charge of the museum's organisation. She shrugged her shoulders and gave Mr. Daniel Mr. Petrus's contact details.

Mr. Petrus told Mr. Daniel the same thing he told me; that the collection was registered at SAHRA and as such, had to be maintained and presented in a manner suitable for public viewing. The museum's collection was not for sale to private collectors. When Mr. Daniel asked about the Trust's intentions for the museum building, which had become too small to accommodate the growing number of artefacts, Mr. Petrus admitted that the current location was problematic. When Mr. Daniel pitched his idea of a new location for the museum, he said that Mr. Petrus showed much interest.

Victoria-Chambers Boutique Hotel

About thirty minutes into our interview, I asked Mr. Daniel how his proposal for the museum had progressed. Mr. Daniel said that he had had a meeting with Mr. Petrus in which he motivated for the use of the empty stone buildings at Victoria-Chambers Boutique Hotel as a potential site for the museum. He said that the meeting went very well and that Mr. Petrus was very interested in the idea.

I realised that in conversations with Mr. Daniel, Victoria-Chambers Boutique Hotel featured prominently and asked him about his family's farm. He smiled, saying that "the land" was a very "powerful geographic place" because of its long history of human settlement. Mr. Daniel explained that Victoria-Chambers Boutique Hotel was situated next to an important archaeological site with Iron Age artefacts, some of which had been discovered at Silver Leaves, a neighbouring farm. As he traced the ancient history of the place, Mr. Daniel got more and more excited. Resituating the museum to the oldest stone building on the farm because the "space lends itself to an extension of a museum into the family gardens", was an opportunity for him to link the ancient past with a more recent one.

Victoria-Chambers Boutique Hotel was about 20 kilometres from Aranya on Agatha Road and was managed by several people on behalf of the Hilton-Barber family trust. Mr. Daniel's ancestral home on the farm had been turned into a hotel called Victoria-Chambers Boutique Hotel where overnight and day visitors could enjoy "incredible wide-ranging mountain views", a walk through the "famous country garden" or stay in "luxury accommodation in a century-old heritage home" (Anon n.d.). At the time of our interview, Mr. Daniel said that he had taken over as general director of the hotel two months previously and that his sister, Mrs. Bridget, was the hotel's manageress. A local online newspaper celebrated the "return" of the family to their "ancestral hotel" (Anon 2019g). On Victoria-Chambers Boutique Hotel's website, the hotel was advertised as "being born of a romantic spirit", while the estate's bone-white "blue gum tree" was said to be a "symbol of Victoria-Chambers Boutique Hotel's magical romantic spirit" (Anon n.d.). Mr. Daniel's sister might have had a hand in the writing of the website because its references to romantic spirits and ancestral history were repeated throughout her semi-autobiographical novel about the farm, *Gardens of my Ancestors* (Hilton-Barber 2018).

In *Garden of my Ancestors,* Mrs. Bridget described Victoria-Chambers Boutique Hotel as a place of "magical" healing largely set in the garden (rather than the wider farm). Walking the reader through the garden, she describes different sections that evoked memories of her ancestors and deceased domestic workers who had worked for the family. These memories take corporeal form in her description of them as lingering old spirits that lived in the garden and flourished in proportion to the amount of tragedies that had unfolded outside the house's front door (Hilton-Barber 2018: 64). The book is a collection of seemingly independent recollections of key moments in her life, the lives of her family and friends, and recollections of the lives of her ancestors. Mrs. Bridget explained in the book that the stories were a record of the "personal journey" she embarked on to find in Victoria-Chambers Boutique Hotel what she felt had been missing from her life. She wrote about challenges she faced and overcame, the losses her family endured, their grievances and the unruly nature of three generations of relatives (Hilton-Barber 2018: 24).

Reading the book, I was intrigued by Mrs. Bridget's claim that she and her family, ancestors included, felt kinship toward their black workers and neighbouring communities. She wrote extensively about her family's broad respect, response to and engagement with the cultural beliefs and traditions of those working for them. In one story, she recalled when her grandfather allowed their domestic worker's son to host an initiation school on their farm. In

another story, her mother employed a *sangoma* (traditional healer) called Neverdie to bless them and their home one Christmas day (Hilton-Barber 2018: 88, 104). Her recollections of her parents and grandparents were of people whose lives were intimately intertwined with those of people who worked in their home and garden. The book included many personal details of the lives of those workers living in separate quarters on the now-neighbouring farm (Hilton-Barber 2018: 74). Throughout, her stories suggested that she and her family had a closer bond with their black workers than what was considered normal in the area.

In Mrs. Bridget's stories of her family's kinship with black neighbours and workers, the figure of Melea, the family's elderly domestic worker who raised two generations of the family, loomed large. Mrs. Bridget wrote at length about the close attachment she had to Melea, the woman who called her "*mogadibo*" (darling) (Hilton-Barber 2018: 72). She portrayed Melea as a significant and influential figure in her childhood, but also as a source of motherly comfort and trusted advice in her adult life. To underscore her kinship to Melea and the other workers, the book contained several photographs of the hotel's employees alongside pictures of the Hilton-Barbers.

Mrs. Bridget's autobiographical novel, and particularly its sections on her and her family's kinship relationships to people that worked for them, evidences a familiar trope in racial relations shaped by colonialism. Her account of her relationship with Melea for instance is filled with anecdotes of tender affection, loyalty and mutual recognition, very much like the Dutch nostalgic tales of cared-for and loyal servants highlighted by Stoler (2002: 173-4). But as the literature shows, these relations are often inflected by a kind of patronage that reduces the objects of affection to a perpetual immature state. Mrs. Bridget described behaviour on the farm after weekends, "Mondays are *babalass* [(sic.) hangover] days, when the gang is still giddy from the weekend's drinking… the staff fall about, Caliban-like, quarrelling, staggering and bumping into mirrors and statues" (Hilton-Barber 2018: 81). Such descriptions occurred frequently throughout Mrs. Bridget's novel and were all about the farm's workers when they were not working.

At the height of apartheid, when Mrs. Bridget was growing up and the period in which much of the book was set, Whisson and Weil (1971: 46) described how white employers often "addressed [their black domestic workers] like a child, ordered about like a child", until these women finally treated growing children as their superiors. Three decades later, Nyamnjoh's (2005: 192) research on "madams" in South Africa and Botswana showed that this pattern of

relations had not changed much as "madams" continued to view their "maids" as eternal children who had "boyfriends" rather than husbands, while their children were seen as youthful indiscretions (Nyamnjoh 2005: 192; cf. Whisson & Weil 1971: 36). Despite such radically unequal relationships and their violent implications for the recognition of domestic workers as adults, Nyamnjoh (2005: 184) pointed out that "madams" tended to glorify their kindness and generosity towards their "maids".

In her book, Mrs. Bridget positioned herself and her family as different from other white families in the area, the fundamental difference based on the intimate relationship with their black workers. This was already evident in her description of the intimate lives of workers on the farm when they were not working. Specifically though, Mrs. Bridget wrote about Melea's family who stayed with Melea on the farm, "her family's lives and mine are so intertwined we're practically related" (Hilton-Barber 2018: 74). But while she claimed kinship with Melea and her family, Mrs. Bridget singled Melea out as a particularly unruly, juvenile individual. In one story, she told how Melea drank too much and fell about. In another story, Melea snuck out at night to meet an admirer who brought them alcohol to drink and presents for her to open (Hilton-Barber 2018:79-80). This situated her novel against other similar novels who had been criticised for their problematic portrayal of relationships with black workers. In her book *Like Family* (2019), Ena Jansen discussed how black domestic workers were portrayed in novels written by white authors. Jansen posited that black domestic workers were portrayed as "marginal women", incidental to a novel's main plot and also in a "one-dimensional manner" (Jansen 2019: 237). She further argued that white authors, and therefore white characters, seemed preoccupied with "ambivalent and complex relationships… involving black women in subordinate positions" (Jansen 2019: 237). Jansen referenced novels in which the portrayal of such relationships were, on the surface, cordial and polite, yet fundamentally still paternalistic (Jansen 2019: 237-8).

Apart from Mrs. Bridget's description of her (and her family's) kinship to the farm's workers due to their shared domestic intimacy, Mrs. Bridget also spoke about her sense of belonging to the land. In one passage, she described the urgency she felt in trying to obtain a neighbouring farm that once formed part of Victoria-Chambers Boutique Hotel. As she described in the novel, the family "lost" the land Stone Cottage was built on in 1935 (Hilton-Barber 2018: 79). Stone Cottage had been in her family since 1904 when her grandfather first settled on the land, relocating from Hertfordshire, England (Hilton-Barber 2018: 15). In the novel, she did not explain how this loss occurred but described how she had in recent years

bought Stone Cottage from its Australian seller, Mr. Schitzel, after she found out it was for sale. In her words, she knew "in an instant that it will be mine" despite the fact that she herself never lived in Stone Cottage, Melea did (Hilton-Barber 2018: 106). In many respects, Mrs. Bridget's acquisition of what was in effect Melea's home, mirrored a trope that Andrew Hartnack (2015) described for other novels and descriptions by white settlers. In *Whiteness and shades of grey: erasure, amnesia and the ethnography of Zimbabwe's whites*, Hartnack (2015: 289) claimed that white settlers "found belonging in nature and imagined the natives away". In a similar manner, Mrs. Bridget's description of the acquisition of Stone Cottage mentioned that Melea, her partner and children and their children had lived in Stone Cottage for many years but did not acknowledge their claims to ownership or belonging to it (Hilton-Barber 2018: 106, 116). Interestingly, Mrs. Bridget's description of her family's loss of land did not reference the much wider and more violent dispossession of land that saw the majority of black South Africans losing their land to successive discriminatory legislation (De Beer 2006: 26-7; Hall 2014: 1).

Land claims were certainly familiar to the Hilton-Barbers because of the extent of claims made on white farm land in the wider Aranya area (see Chapter 3). In the area, land claims were not limited to agricultural land only and extended to the town's central business area, some top residential properties and also a large part of the industrial area (Viljoen 2018). In Aranya, land claims had been made on areas such as Medi Park (a cluster of medical suites), Fauna Park and Sentra Park; which included 192 residential properties, 57 business stands, 14 municipal properties, four state-owned properties, and seven properties owned by religious groups or churches. Laerskool Aranya (Aranya Primary School) and the Van Velden Hospital also fell within the area on which land claims had been made (Viljoen 2018). In 2018, the Land Claims Commissioner resolved land claims on properties that fell within Aranya's new industrial area by paying claimants monetary compensation for land lost. At the time of my research, there was considerable alarm from white farmers (and businessmen) in the area over the possibility that the Constitution might be amended to include land expropriation without compensation (see Viljoen 2018).

No land claims had been made on Victoria-Chambers Boutique Hotel, probably because the family had been on the farm in 1913 when the Land Act, which the post-apartheid government used as the legal watershed year for claims, was promulgated (Cebekhulu, 2013). However, local and national newspapers frequently reported on the local unhappiness voiced by many land claimants and frustrated would-be claimants in the area. According to the

Polokwane Observer, a local newspaper outlet, land claimants were running out of patience, "fed up with government playing games with their livelihoods and dignity" (Rachuene 2017). Claimant communities had waited for longer than twenty years for the Land Commission in Limpopo to finalise their land claims. Claimants insisted that the reason for such slow progress in the processing of their land claims was that some of the "directors who are given responsibility to facilitate the land claims at the provincial office are on the payroll of the famers occupying their land" (Rachuene 2017). At a land hearing in Marble Hall in 2018, Julius Malema, the leader of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), was at the centre of attention as crowds of locals, some of them dressed in EFF regalia, gave their views on the proposed amendments to Section 25 of the Constitution to the Waterberg district council. The proposed amendments would allow government to expropriate land from its legal owners without paying them compensation (Ledwaba 2018). Ledwaba (2018) reported that many locals appeared star-struck by Julius Malema, and started their oral submissions praising him for "bringing government to hear their views". The hearing exposed a deep-rooted anger felt among landless black South Africans; at the same time, it brought to light the fear and uncertainty among whites who owned most of the land (Ledwaba 2018). *AfriForum* and the trade union Solidarity, bent on exposing the "plight of the white farmers", spear-headed the fight against the proposed amendment to allow land expropriation without compensation that was at the time entering into a legal trail (Daniel 2018). The trial, in which two local game farms near Musina in Limpopo were apparently targeted for expropriation without compensation, focused on *Akkerland Boerdery (Pty) Ltd* (Daniel 2018; Eybers 2018).

As she pointed out in the book, many of Mrs. Bridget's ancestors were buried in the garden (Hilton-Barber 2018: 64), which in a South African context is also a deep claim to belonging to a specific place and to ownership of land (Stites 2000: 58). Her understanding of the family garden as the final resting place of her ancestors and where she can connect directly with them was not unlike the claims of many African people. According to Stites (2000: 54), many African people in South Africa believed that communication between the living and dead was most effective at their ancestors' burial site, and that access to these burial sites was what informed many land claim disputes in the Eastern Cape and Mpumalanga provinces, and also more broadly in South Africa. In post-apartheid South Africa, such claims of belonging, based on an attachment to ancestral burial sites, has been instrumentalised in the country's restorative land claims process by black South Africans who had been dispossessed of land after 1913 (Stites 2000: 44). It is therefore telling that the Hilton-Barbers did not allow farm workers to

be buried in the same garden, yet allowed farm workers to continue the tradition of inscribing their names onto new additions to the garden as it was built and renovated over the years.

The "Limpopo Museum of Magic"

When speaking about his sister's book, Mr. Daniel jokingly said that all the stories were unfortunately true and to some degree anecdotal as dialogues were reconstructed from memory. Mr. Daniel said that her book, the "wall of ancestors" and the heritage of Victoria-Chambers Boutique Hotel more generally, had more to do with the narratives of the land and was limited to "the anthropology of the homestead". With the planned museum, separate yet adjacent to the hotel, he wanted to present two different histories of the area. He hoped that his envisioned museum would allow him to construct a people's history that would be separate from the intimate family history of Victoria-Chambers Boutique Hotel. For him, the family's history was an intimate account of his family's current and past deeds, while "the people's" history was more of a public affair.

Towards the end of our conversation, I asked Mr. Daniel what type of ideas he would include in his proposal. Mr. Daniel admitted that the proposal was in its infancy but that he had certain concrete ideas with regards to the use of the artefacts. With his hands pointing firmly in front of him and a hint of excitement in his voice, Mr. Daniel explained his plans. He wanted to renovate the big stone building which had not been maintained or used in years, except for housing the farm's generator. Customising the space to display museum objects with their "narratives", he wanted this new museum to be a "satellite" of the Aranya Museum. This would allow him to use the Aranya Museum's artefacts on a rotational basis, depending on the narratives and themes focused on at different times. He wanted something "elegant and contemporary" with lots of glass walls and sky lights. Behind the display area, he wanted to create a performative space where artefacts such as the musical instruments, masks and certain sculptures would be incorporated into "performative narratives". His proposal would ideally have a content section that would illustrate how he would portray the artefacts.

Mr. Daniel emphasised that he did not want to follow traditional ways of categorising artefacts, which led to a museum that "looks like a warehouse" of random African artefacts and everyday items. He was much more interested in creating "something more dynamic, something that came alive, with displays based on alternating themes, such as love, dreams or rituals". Using the same artefacts in alternating displays, he said, would make them, to a certain

degree, “more mobile” than the “old concept of the dry museum with static displays”. Mr. Daniel wanted to create a space where “things happened”, like regular piano recitals and other such events. He wanted to incorporate a dark room that visitors could enter and watch a film on local music or dance. In combining the stone wall architecture with a still-to-be-designed contemporary space, Mr. Daniel hoped to create a professional space “designed like magic and integrated into the [family] garden… a real Limpopo touristic land mark”. He wanted international tourists to walk in and immediately say ‘Wow, this *is* world-class!”

Outside the stone building leading into the garden behind the hotel, Mr. Daniel wanted to construct a medicinal garden, or a garden of Venda sculptures like they had at Kirstenbosch Garden in Cape Town. He thought of creating historical “timelines” along the walking paths that went through the garden. Mr. Daniel also mentioned creating a “Modjadji garden because you overlook the Modjadji Mountains” from the front of the hotel. This would be a “nice extension” leading from the garden into the museum where he had special plans for the Modjadji artefacts in the Aranya museum. Mr. Daniel planned to isolate the Modjadji artefacts, embellish them with black and white photographs, possibly incorporate a Modjadji family tree, and then fill in the leftover open spaces in the new museum with other sources. This would allow for a “fuller Modjadji offering” for visitors. Mr. Daniel believed that with the museum at Victoria-Chambers Boutique Hotel, they could market the “magic and mystery” of Limpopo province, which according to Mr. Daniel was long seen as “the home of witchcraft in South Africa” (Baloyi 2014: 1; Krige & Krige 1943: 250)

Mr. Daniel’s envisioned exhibition of the “magic and mystery” of Limpopo was restricted to the artefacts in the Aranya museum, which held Tsonga, Sotho, Venda and Modjadji examples. By attaching mystical and exotic connotations to the artefacts he inadvertently marked them as “other”. In constructing the museum around the mystical and exotic character, Mr. Daniel drew specifically on the imputed rainmaking abilities of the Modjadji queens, which he said was to be the “centre piece” of the museum. Mr. Daniel commented that the story of the Modjadji queen is a “romantic” one, filled with “taboo and intrigue”. He also made specific reference to the Modjadji house guard, “the protector of the house, which is quite a *Baptiste*”, as one of the artefacts he would most likely focus on in the new museum. Murrey (2017: 2) argued that “spiritual Othering”, using associations such as “witchcraft” and “taboo”, “has been and continues to be a central feature of the colonial production of knowledge”. The vulgarisation of African magic and occult as witchcraft reflects what Murrey (2017: 3) called a pre-contact imaginary of a Eurocentric world view.

Mr. Daniel was white, comparatively wealthy and male, and in the context of South Africa's history of white male domination, these traits would have allowed him to convey to his audience what the magic and mystery of African cultures was truly about (Said 1978: 14). If read in line with Said's conception of the Orient, Mr. Daniel had certain ideas about African people and cultures, specifically in Limpopo, and related them and their artefacts to ideas of magic, witchcraft and mystery (Said 1978: 15), which inadvertently positioned Limpopo, and black people in the area, as people who possess exotic beliefs related to magic and witchcraft.

Museums and distinction

Mr. Daniel insisted that his plans for the "Limpopo Museum of Magic" was not financially motivated but that it went "deeper" than that for him. If the project "enriched the community", was established at Victoria-Chambers Boutique Hotel, and created "a positive energy", he said that he would be "satisfied". In this ambition, Mr. Daniel shared in the ambitions of a number of rich South African families who have, in the post-apartheid era, opened art galleries, museums and other attractions on wine farms. Many of these farms have also converted family hotels into guesthouses as upscale tourist attractions.

The Spier Wine Farm, owned by the Enthoven family, for example, had one of the largest contemporary art collections in South Africa. The collection was exhibited in the Spier Hotel and other art pieces were featured in the garden as part of the Spier Artist Patronage Programme (Anon 2018b). Another illustrious family, the wealthy Ruperts, officially opened the Rupert Museum in 2005 after it was commissioned by the late Dr Huberte Rupert in 2003. Set among the "picturesque vineyards and oak trees on the banks of Eersterivier" (Anon 2019d), the museum displays Anton and Huberte Rupert's private collection of art consisting mainly of paintings, sculptures and tapestries. Collected from 1940 to 2006, the collection has been described as "the premier collection of contemporary South African art form the period 1940-1970" (Anon 2019d). There are also the examples of the Delaire Graff art holdings and the Glenelly Wine Estate in Stellenbosch's (art) Glass museum (Anon 2017). Many other wine farm and estate owners like the Artefunto Art Gallery and the Art Gallery at Grande Provence in Franschhoek and Helshoogte respectively have followed suit and there is now a Stellenbosch Art Route along the Cape Winelands Route (Anon 2019b; Anon 2019c).

In opening museums, art galleries and similar attractions based on "high culture" (Bourdieu 1986: 34), such rich South Africans were engaged in a process of "distinction". For

instance, the Delaire Graff website's two-line invitation to "experience" its art collection marked this distinction in very specific ways. It stated,

> In 2013 a very special painting was returned home to South Africa and Delaire Graff Estate. One of the most iconic pieces of the 20th Century – and the first piece of art to inspire a lifelong passion in Laurence Graff – guests can view Vladimir Tretchikoff's iconic Chinese Girl, currently on display in the entrance to our main building (Anon 2020).

The return "home" of the Chinese Girl to South Africa, specifically to the Delaire Graff Estate near Stellenbosch, to be displayed alongside the owner, Laurence Graff's private art collection, was celebrated as an auspicious occasion within South Africa's art community (Anon 2013). Laurence Graff is an avid collector of modern and contemporary art and a popular figure in local and international art appreciation communities (Anon 2020). The Chinese Girl is one of the most "iconic" (Anon 2018c) and mass distributed art pieces of the 20th century. Laurence Graff's widely advertised purchase of the piece for R13.8 million (Anon 2018c) was an obvious marker of distinction, for the Graff family and also the Delaire Graff Estate. Posel and van Wyk (2019: 20) argued that this kind of "conspicuous consumption", taken as a performance of material abundance, was an expression of social standing and needed an audience to work. The grandiose purchase of the Chinese Girl, especially noticed among farms and estates and local and international art communities, set Laurence Graff and the Delaire Graff Estate apart from other wine farm and estate owners, and also art collectors, who had also constructed art galleries and museums as part of their attraction.

Bourdieu describes this process whereby actors mark and establish class differences and embed value in the most automatic gestures or insignificant techniques of the body that distinguish themselves from those in a different social position or space (Bourdieu 1986: 466). As he asserted, the process unfolded in the distinctive ways that the bourgeoisie spoke about art, dressed and referenced their cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986: 270). Mr. Daniel's potential acquisition of the Aranya Museum artefacts allowed him to acquire "objectified" cultural capital embedded in the artefacts (Bourdieu 1986: 245-6) that added to the "embodied" cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986: 243), or habitus, that he acquired by growing up in a wealthy and distinguished family (Bourdieu 1986: 196).

By trying to acquire a collection that would be housed at Victoria-Chambers Boutique Hotel, an estate that had been in his family for three generations, Mr. Daniel's plans for the museum was part of this process of distinction-making among landed families in South Africa.

It would certainly set the estate apart from the other sprawling family farms in the area where none of them had museums or art collections as part of their attractions. Generally, the up-scale hotels and lodges in and around Aranya had accommodation facilities, a restaurant and bar, conference rooms and many, like the *Coach House Hotel & Spa*, also offered visitors a range of spa and beauty treatments in an in-house spa. Victoria-Chambers Boutique Hotel offered visitors this general set of services with the exception of a spa. But unlike the Rupert and Delaire collections, Mr. Daniel's planned "Limpopo Museum of Magic" also established a very particular relationship of patronage vis-à-vis a local "community". By taking the collection, packaging it in very specific ways and resituating it to address an international tourist audience, Mr. Daniel was not simply a curator but a patron.

Museum patronage has a long history dating back to the 19th century (Knapman 2011: 8). According to Knapman (2011: 7), ethnology collections that were housed in colonial museums were modelled after museums in the empire. Such collections, an accumulation of artefacts from various colonies, reflected the cultural aspirations of 19th century museum's leading patrons, rather than an attempt to understand the cultures whose objects were collected and displayed (Knapman 2011: 8). A collection of Mr. Gerhard's artefacts, in a museum at Victoria-Chambers Boutique Hotel, would reflect Mr. Daniel's cultural and entrepreneurial aspirations.

The "local community" as audience

When Mr. Daniel spoke about his plans for the museum on Victoria-Chambers Boutique Hotel, he was adamant that it would be accessible to "the public". He planned to adapt the stone building for visitors, widen the road leading up to Victoria-Chambers Boutique Hotel, ensure 24 hour security and add on a quaint coffee shop offering treats and drinks for day visitors. Apart from the tourists he was sure would visit the museum, Mr. Daniel also planned to host team- or individual workshops on alternating themes for local businesses and private groups within "the community".

It was not clear to me what Mr. Daniel meant with his references to "the community". From my previous trip to Victoria-Chambers Boutique Hotel, I knew that the narrow twisting road up the mountain, twenty kilometres from Aranya was only reachable by car for most of the local "public". When I visited, two or three cars passed me by, while a lone black woman hiked down the path because no public taxis drove onto the farm. I asked Mr. Daniel about the

locals who did not have private cars and who relied on a public transport system that did not include his farm. Mr. Daniel quickly replied that he wanted to use busses to bring groups of people residing in Aranya, like school children and members of local groups and affiliations to the hotel. There, Miss Cynthia could tell Tsonga tales using the Rikhotso sculptures. However, unlike the practice at the Aranya museum, Mr. Daniel said that it would be done differently at the hotel; instead of Miss Cynthia telling the stories with stationery sculptures, he said he would like school children to participate in the storytelling, allowing them to move the sculptures as the stories were told. He wanted an interactive educational space. School outreach programmes, in his opinion, would have created an engaging learning environment open to storytelling, music, dance, and song.

At the end of our interview, I asked Mr. Daniel what had inspired him to take on this project. He replied that it felt like a "calling of sorts". Perking up in his chair, he explained that he felt something "pulling" him towards the museum project. He admitted that he had decided to invest his energy into this project, which drove it at first, but that the project had gained its own momentum. He then took a sip of his expresso and settled back into his chair, deep in thought. After a pause, Mr. Daniel admitted that he had been going through significant life changes, and that he had increasingly found himself reflecting on his life. When he thought about the museum, he said that he saw it as a "legacy project". When he considered how much longer he had "to breathe", he believed that designing the museum was worthwhile because it was "preserving something, giving it back to the community, and building up Victoria-Chambers Boutique Hotel".

Conclusion

In this chapter, I showed how one potential future for the Aranya museum was intricately connected to the processes in which one wealthy local family participated in wider networks of social distinction -and how members of the family imagined its relationships to local black communities in the area. As such, the family was not a-historically or asocially situated; it lived in a social environment that had been shaped by radical racial discrimination and histories of land dispossession and land claims that have questioned the legitimacy of local white land ownership, especially in the Limpopo Province. Against such contexts, the family tried to portray itself as different from other local white, landed families, and spoke about their black employees as kin, relationships they claimed spanned three generations.

Mr. Daniel's proposal for a "Limpopo Museum of Magic" using the Aranya Museum artefacts fitted neatly into this narrative. Symbolically, the museum was important because it contained artefacts of "magical" black communities, and situated the family as the legitimate holders of this legacy because they had such a good and long-standing relationship to local black people, the Aranya Museum's "source communities". This portrayal however was not unproblematic and partook in wider narratives of white paternalism that "discount[ed]" (Hartnack 2015: 289), and pushed black identities into the periphery of towns and cities (Jansen 2019: 268).

In the next chapter, I will explore the ways in which this "source community" framed the Aranya Museum and thought about their material cultural artefacts within the museum. I will also examine source community members' burgeoning interest in cultural tourism and the use of objects in the form of a community museum as a means to validate their cultural identity and authority.

Chapter 5: The Aranya Museum and the Modjadji "source community"

Introduction

Mr. Gerhard's apathy when it came to engaging with the museum's source communities (see Chapter 2), Mr. Petrus's disregard of the supposed claimants to artefacts in the Aranya Museum (see Chapter 3), and Mr. Daniel's proposal, in a "Limpopo Museum of Magic", for the superficial inclusion of source communities through workshops and out-reach programmes were not one-sided affairs. The "source community" (Peers & Brown 2003: 2), which included the Modjadji royal family and Balobedu people living near Aranya, showed little interest in the museum and its displays of Balobedu culture and Queen Modjadji IV's artefacts. And even though some of them were aware that communities elsewhere have engaged with local museums to produce knowledge about and display artefacts that pertain to their histories and lives, there was little interest here in similar initiatives. Instead, both regular community members and members of the Royal family wanted to create their own ethnic museums to attract tourists to the area; each for their own reasons.

In this chapter, I unpack this source community's response to the Aranya Museum's display of their "culture". I will show how source community members differed in their vision for incorporating local people in the making of these museums and how their differing visions for ethnic museums in the area commodified and asserted cultural – and political- identities. The commodification of everyday items and cultural performances through envisioned tourism was also an attempt by source community members to illustrate that they had a defined culture with a well-established cultural heritage and legacy independent of the Aranya Museum.

"Community" and tourism

I first came across tours of the Modjadji Royal Compound on a tourism advertising website called *Tours Africa*. It promoted tours to the royal compound as a "cultural experience of South Africa's only queenship" (Anon 2018d; Anon 2018e). Advertised as a half-day or full-day "Modjadji experience in Aranya", the tour of six hours took visitors to the Modjadji Royal Kraal where a local guide would provide them with "interesting insights into the legendary Modjadji". Also included was a visit to the "Royal Palace of Modjadji" where a guide would shed light on the daily life in the palace and share with visitors the traditions and beliefs of the Balobedu people (Anon 2018d; Anon 2018e). The tour ended with a lunch at the Modjadji

Cycad Reserve. The Modjadji cycad trees, which filled the nature reserve, formed a natural forest that could be viewed in "its prehistoric state" due to its strict protection by preceding Modjadji queens (Anon 2019a). Excited, I booked two tours through *Q&M Tours.*

I met Mr. Garret, my driver and co-owner of *Q&M Tours,* when he picked me and my father up on the morning of the 1st December 2018 at *Golden Acres Estate* at 08h00 and drove us to Modjadjiskloof for the first of my two scheduled tours. We arrived at the Modjadji tribal authority's main building, which stood on a hill and overlooked much of Modjadjiskloof. Mr. Garret decided to park opposite this building at the *Modjadji Tavern* while we waited for our tour guide, Mr. Musa to arrive. The tour was scheduled to start at 9 am and after thirty minutes of waiting, Mr. Garret decided to walk to Mr. Musa's house to see what was keeping him. Mr. Garret came back with news that Mr. Musa was attending a funeral in Aranya and that he would not be leading our tour. Mr. Garret was embarrassed and tried to contact someone called Mr. Joseph whom he had relied on once before when Mr. Musa was also not available. Yet Mr. Joseph could not make it either. Mr. Garret explained that there was only one accredited tourist operator at the Modjadji tribal authority, Mr. Musa and that Mr. Joseph was an accepted stand-in but that he could not get anyone else to do the tour. My father and I's long-awaited tour of the Modjadji Royal Compound and a summer lunch at the Modjadji Nature Reserve were cancelled. Mr. Garret drove us back to Aranya and promised that our next tour on the Monday would proceed without a hitch.

On Monday afternoon, the 3rd December 2018, Mr. Garret fetched me at *Golden Acres* again and we arrived at the Modjadji tribal authority right in time for the tour at 14h00. The Modjadji tribal authority was significantly busier than it was on the pervious Saturday, with men relaxing on chairs under the trees and women walking in and out the office. One of the ladies noticed us and came outside to ask us if she could help us. Mr. Garret asked her about Mr. Musa's whereabouts because he was scheduled to give a tour. The woman informed us that Mr. Musa was attending a meeting at a lodge 60 km from Modjadjiskloof and that he would be unlikely to get back that morning. Mr. Garret became slightly agitated and cursed Mr. Musa's "tardiness". He loudly complained that Mr. Musa had already cancelled a tour that we were supposed to go on three days before. Mr. Garret pulled out his cell phone to call Mr. Musa but then sheepishly admitted that Mr. Musa had sent him a text message saying that he would be delayed. Mr. Garret apologised, saying that he should have checked his phone before he drove us to the meeting place. I had the impression that Mr. Garret could do nothing but wait for Mr. Musa so we decided to wait.

While we waited, I asked Mr. Garret about Mr. Musa's financial involvement in *Q&M Tours.* He replied that Mr. Musa received a portion of the amount I paid *Q&M Tours* for arranging the tour. Mr. Garret further explained that only Mr. Musa was paid for conducting the tours because, aside from Mr. Joseph who rarely conducted tours, Mr. Musa was the only person involved in *Q&M's* Modjadji tours. After an hour of waiting under the trees at the Modjadji tribal authority, Mr. Musa called Mr. Garret and told him that he concluded his meeting but that he was having lunch. Mr. Musa arrived at the Modjadji tribal authority forty-five minutes later.

The tour started at the Modjadji tribal authority's offices. Mr. Garret and Mr. Musa greeted each other, and Mr. Garret introduced my father and I to Mr. Musa. Mr. Musa immediately apologised for being late and asked if we were ready to start the tour. We all agreed. Mr. Garret, my father and I followed Mr. Musa as he led us to the *kraal,* situated about 50m from the Modjadji tribal authority offices. He stopped just before the entrance to the royal compound where a medium-sized hole in the ground was filled with withered leaves. Here, Mr. Musa started explaining the progression of the Balobedu's annual rainmaking ceremony. The Queen "is the only designated person amongst us who can speak to the ancestors on our behalf", he proclaimed. Mr. Musa did not go into great detail about the queen's rainmaking rituals, yet said that as she performed those rituals the attendees "sing praises to the Queen". He smiled and demonstrated the rhymes and lyrics they sang. The community, gathered in the kraal, "sing praises to the Queen" as she readies the "concoction in the calabash" for elders to drink from in the royal compound. The Queen, or her chosen delegate, he continued, would then throw the "remaining concoction into the shrine" in the royal compound and only then did "the youth lick the concoction from the shrine". Mr. Musa said the shrine was a circular slab and he would show us once we were inside the royal compound. After the "concoction" was thrown, Mr. Musa explained, the Queen would re-join the community waiting in the *kraal*. Together they then drank traditional beer brewed in the royal compound, played drums that were fetched from the royal house and sang and danced to beseech their ancestors for unity. Mr. Musa allowed several questions, from me, my father and Mr. Garret before he continued the tour, happily answering every question, clearly as best as he was able.

From the *kraal,* we walked to the royal compound and stopped at the Balobedu ancestors' "shrine" consisting of two circular concrete slabs, one resting on top of a larger circular slab which was cemented into the ground that stood outside one of the royal huts (see figure 10). Side-tracked, Mr. Musa then quickly greet three of his family members relaxing

outside their hut, introducing us to his sister and his aunt married to his uncle from one of the four royal families. When he turned his attention back to the business at hand, Mr. Musa pointed at the shrine with an open hand facing downwards. Drawing our attention to his gesture, he emphasised that this gesture was a sign of respect toward the ancestors. He then commented, "This is where it happens!" Mr. Musa explained that the "sacred objects" and the concoction that they threw during the rainmaking rituals were placed on the shrine, where the elders danced around it before they moved to the *kraal* to join the community. Standing in the same location, Mr. Musa showed us his father's hut where he was born and the adjacent house he built for himself. Both were adjacent to the queen's compound (see Figure 10). Aside from his family members, and another elderly women who walked passed us, shoes in hand, the royal compound was rather empty and quiet. Yet, at the time of Krige and Krige's research in the 1940s, the royal village was "pleasant and busy" (1943: 20), with women cooking and children running and playing in-between the huts (Krige & Krige 1943: 20-2).

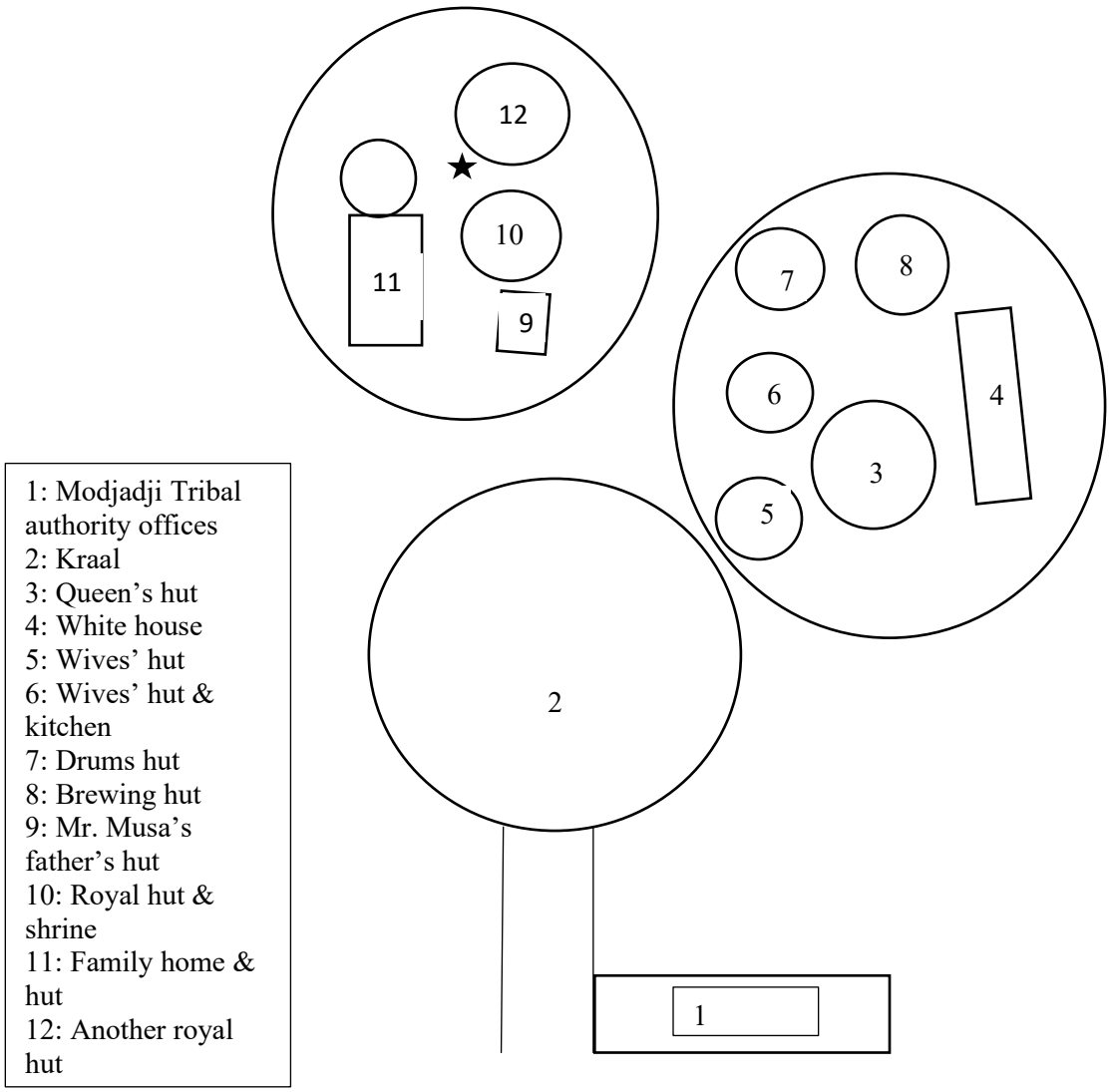

Figure 10: Modjadji royal compound layout. Source: L Hendricks, date: 27/12/2019

Before we left the ancestors' shrine, Mr. Musa then sat down on a ledge at the shrine and retrieved a photo album from his back pocket. He proceeded to show me photographs of the coronation of Queen Modjadji V, of his uncle who was secretary to the royal council during her reign, his father sitting alongside Queen Modjadji V's throne, and a photo of three white men who Mr. Musa said were guests at the coronation. He then also showed me pictures of royal drums, of the poles that surrounded the royal *kraal* and photos of arts and crafts made by people in the community. Mr. Musa confirmed my suspicion that the album was a family album of sorts. In showing me the photographs, I suspected that Mr. Musa aimed to confirm and embellish his intimate relationship and connection to the royal family.

Mr. Musa then led us back to the *kraal* and we walked through another entrance that led back into the royal compound. Here, Mr. Musa pointed out the queen's huts and those that belonged to the queen's "wives" who, according to Krige and Krige (1943:173), were "given to her by her district heads" as a show of allegiance, paying tribute and most importantly supplicating for rain. Mr. Musa explained that the queen's hut stood empty because Masalanabo Modjadji, the queen elect, was attending school in Gauteng. Once she completed her schooling, she would return to reside in the queen's hut. Mr. Musa then unlocked an adjacent hut to show me the drums played during the rainmaking ceremony. He also showed me the kitchen in which the queen's meals were prepared and the hut where the queen's guests would stay before the "white house" was built. We walked to this "white house", which Mr. Musa remarked was a reception area where the queen's "white guests" were hosted.

A few steps from the "white house" Mr. Musa unlocked a hut called the brewery and showed me the different sized pots inside. All traditional beer used in the rainmaking ceremonies or any other royal function was apparently brewed in this hut by royal women in honour of the royal house. Mr. Musa commented that the pots, which stood empty at the time, were usually filled with beer at different stages of the brewing process. He did not explain why this was so. We left the brewery and walked past the "white house" again. Mr. Musa pointed to a stuffed and mounted "wild pig" that hung next to its front door. He said "that is our totem, of the Balobedu", but also commented that it needed to be re-stuffed and mounted by taxidermist. The tour ended as we left the "white house" and returned to the *kraa*l.

During my tour of the royal compound in Khetlhakone royal village, Mr. Musa mainly focused on the rituals performed in the annual rainmaking ceremony, the activities performed in the royal compound and the objects that marked specific ritual phases, such as their ancestors' shrine and the sacred rainmaking objects which he only ever mentioned, vaguely hinting to their location in the royal compound. He told us why we had to take our shoes off at the entrance of the kraal, explained ritual beer-drinking, dancing and singing during the rainmaking ceremony, and how the Balobedu engaged with the ancestors at their shrine, the procedure for preparing the Queen's meals and also the rituals for brewing traditional beer. The tour consisted mainly of Mr. Musa pointing out various *rondavels* (traditional huts) used for various purposes and other structures in the physical environment of the Modjadji queens and royal family. There were no first-hand experiences of royal and "tribal" ceremonies, or opportunities to play the drums or drink traditional beer, all activities that have become commonplace in cultural tours in other parts of South Africa such as Soweto, Cape Town and

KwaZulu-Natal (Witz, Rassool & Minkley, 2001: 279). Instead, Mr. Musa chose to talk about invisible rainmaking ceremonies while pointing to physical markers such as the ancestors' shrine, the queen's hut and the beer brewing pots as evidence of their rituals and ceremonies that were performed.

Mr. Musa took on the role of a "cultural advisor" (Witz et al, 2001: 279) and explained the "way of life" in the royal village. He said that he hoped that through tourism, people could get to learn about the Balobedu people and the Modjadji Rain Queen. Although the tour was interesting and informative and Mr. Musa eagerly answered the questions I posed him, I was also disappointed. The tour lasted a mere 40 minutes instead of the stipulated six hours. Also, as a result of Mr. Musa's lateness, we were not able to enjoy the "summery lunch" among the Modjadji cycad trees as advertised by *Q&M Tours*. Mr. Garret certainly under-delivered on the promises made by his company and Mr. Musa seemed indifferent to this. I had the distinct impression that tourism centred on the Modjadji Rain Queens was in an early development phase or that there were serious problems in the working relationship between Mr. Garret and Mr. Musa. Mr. Musa's lateness and his attitude to it reminded me of James Scott (1985)'s *Weapons of the Weak*. Indeed, at the end of my tour in December 2018, Mr. Musa said that I did not have to go through Mr. Garret's company to arrange another tour, and instead gave me his contact details. He insisted that I contact him directly if I returned the following year and wanted another tour.

I met Mr. Musa again on my second trip to Aranya in March 2019. I had arranged an interview with him at the Modjadji tribal authority, but the interview started an hour after our scheduled time. In the interview, Mr. Musa revealed his plans to further develop tourism at the Modjadji royal compound; he wanted to run the tours independently of *Q&M Tours* because he did not want an intermediary to sell the tours to tourists. Mr. Musa also planned to incorporate more "objects" into his tours of the Modjadji royal compound and to have those objects made by local Balobedu people. As he said, "our people still make them and we can display them". In particular, Mr. Musa wanted to collect artefacts that centred on processes and activities that formed part of daily life in Modjadjiskloof. Using the royal beer hut as an example, Mr. Musa said that he wanted to create a beer-brewing display that depicted the process of brewing traditional beer for royal and non-royal ceremonies. He also wanted Modjadjiskloof's residents to line the entry passage and *kraal* with traditional bowls, pots and beadwork that they made. He then pondered whether recruiting local residents to sit in the kraal and royal compound to make their "nice traditional constructions" (arts, crafts and other items)

for incoming tourists would be feasible. Mr. Musa insisted that this would further spur tourism growth for the Modjadji family as well as "the Balobedu people". For the community, this would "bring some essence to the royal house, it will create an attachment between the Balobedu people and the royal house".

The Modjadji collection, source communities and cultural reparations

The Modjadji collection at the Aranya museum consisted mainly of objects that once belonged to Queen Modjadji IV and other objects from the years of her reign (see Chapter 2). Mr. Gerhard favoured the Modjadji collection among the various other collections he exhibited in the museum, and advertised it as the museum's main attraction (see Chapter 2). The museum signboard proclaimed that "one of the most exotic exhibits at the museum is the royal drum used in the service of the great grandmother of Rain Queen, which dates back to 1850". In his personal file that described the museum's collections (see Chapter 2), Mr. Gerhard raved about his Modjadji collection and the value it added to his wider collection. Mr. Gerhard's death left the museum open to new parties, such as Agri24's Mr. Petrus and Mr. Daniel entering the museum, and also left the artefacts open to being re-read and re-appropriated by those entering. Yet as we saw in Chapters 2 and 3, this re-reading and re-appropriating of artefacts were directly influenced by the political position of both men and the symbolic capital that the museum's artefacts brought to their individual projects.

In many respects, the symbolic capital that these artefacts held for Mr. Petrus and Mr. Daniel shared in the capital they had as objects in a colonial museum. Exhibiting artefacts emblematic of power such as royal, religious and chiefly regalia was a long-standing exhibition tradition at many metropolitan museums during colonial times, and was common in the South African Museum. In this colonial tradition, Mr. Gerhard understood the cultural significance of Queen Modjadji IV's artefacts and the value they added to his collection as a whole (see Chapter 2). Recalling Mr. Musa's story (see Chapter 2) of Mr. Gerhard's persistent visits and patience when he requested items of Queen Modjadji IV, Mr. Gerhard invested a great deal of time and effort into adding to his collection artefacts that came directly from South Africa's only queenship (see Krige & Krige 1943). In a context where source communities had started to make claims on the material collections of museums, I made plans to interview two members of the Modjadji family and members of the source community. When Mr. Petrus heard about

this, he was alarmed that I had contacted the "community". Unprompted, he proclaimed that the museum would never return artefacts to the "community" (see Chapter 3).

In the latter half of the twentieth century, ethnographic museums faced an uncertain future as indigenous people began pursuing self-determination and questioned the existence of museums that defined their histories and identities in ways that were often derogatory, decontextualised and one-dimensional. More and more source communities began challenging the right of museums to tell their histories and hold collections obtained from their ancestors, often violently (see Chapter 2; Peers & Brown 2003: 19). Source communities began to insist on their active participation and involvement in local and national museums' research and exhibition projects containing collections and artefacts of their ancestors (Peers & Brown 2003: 11; Schramm 2016: 134). They began criticising the focus and emphasis placed on preservation and instead argued for access to museum objects for the purpose of cultural renewal and well-being (Peers & Brown 2003: 20) as well as the restoration of dignity and cultural reparation (Schramm 2016: 138). Source communities began taking active steps to regain ownership of museum objects that were made and used by their ancestors (Peers & Brown, 2003: 19) or that contained human remains connected to living descendants, whether factually connected to such a community or not (Schramm 2016: 137).

One example of a source community that claimed back control of an exhibition and representation of collections informed by colonial collecting and exhibiting practices was a Benin Dialogue Group in Nigeria (Bakare 2019). Jesus College in Cambridge established a Legacy of Slavery Working Party (LSWP) to look into the institutions' connections to slavery and the legacy of slave trade it left behind. The LSWP recommended that Jesus College return a bronze cockerel, a "royal ancestral heirloom" that was looted by British colonial forces from the Benin Kingdom in Nigeria and donated to the institution in 1905 (Bakare 2019). This decision saw many other African countries, including the Ivory Coast, Senegal and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, make formal requests for the return of artefacts from similar institutions across the United Kingdom (Bakare 2019).

On the topic of museum claims and reparations in South Africa specifically, much of the literature has long focused on collections and representations of Bushmen and Khoisan people precisely because these communities were especially targeted by colonial collectors (Gordon 1992: 188). With the attention drawn by Skotnes's (1996) *Miscast* book and exhibition at Iziko, Legassick and Rassool's *Skeletons in the Cupboard* (2000) and the return of Saartje

Baartman's remains in 2001[5], the issue of indigenous collections and human remains became a major topic of public consciousness in South Africa (Schramm 2014: 14). Central to these books and exhibitions were the realisation that the holdings in South African museums were accompanied by the "horror and barbarity" that characterised the "conquest, dispossession and genocide of the Khoisan" (Legassick & Rassool 2000: 49) and other indigenous communities (see Chapter 2).

With political liberation in 1994 and an increased awareness of the issue of unethical museum collection practices in South Africa, over a period of more than 20 years, a number of museums in South Africa were confronted by demands for restitution and the return of human remains and cultural artefacts from indigenous source communities (see Chapter 3). In 2003, the issue of indigenous collections and human remains reached a high point in Cape Town when conflict erupted over the human remains at the Prestwich Memorial. While scientists insisted that their isotope analysis and radiocarbon-dating could "give a voice to the dead" by providing information on the concrete circumstances of those buried there, activists objected that such invasive techniques further objectified and violated black bodies (Schramm 2016: 136-137). But not all claimant communities reacted in the same way. When an old skeleton was discovered in Hermanus, the town museum and Khoisan activists worked together to ascertain the origins of the remains by sending it for radiocarbon-dating (Schramm 2016: 138).

In a postcolonial and post-apartheid context, Legassick and Rassool (2000: 49) asserted that there was no conceivable value in the preservation of human remains and indigenous artefacts by museums that could outweigh the ethical need for restitution. While museums in other parts of the world have created several "working groups" to change museum practices to suit the needs of source community members and foster better working relationships with them (Peers & Brown 2003: 12), museums in South Africa have generally faced an uphill battle in this regard. Even new museums, established to represent the political struggles and histories of local communities and to change the relationship between museums and "source communities" have not been in particularly successful.

Two new museums in particular stand out in this regard; the Red Location Museum of the Struggle in New Brighton, Port Elizabeth, and the Lwandle Migrant Labour Museum, in

[5] Saartje Baartman was the first person of Khoisan ancestry to be taken England (in 1810), to be studied as a pure Bushmen specimen. While alive, she was put on display as the "Hottentot Venus" for various European publics. She died in 1815 after which her body was casted in wax, dissected, and her skeleton articulated to be analysis and examined (Skotnes 1996: 69-70). Saartje Baartman's remains were stored in the Musèe de l'Homme in Paris (Skotnes 1996: 17).

Lwandle, Western Cape. The Lwandle museum, the only museum in the Western Cape situated in a township, wanted to preserve an old labour hostel and community hall to commemorate the system of migrant labour, single sex hostels and the apartheid control of black workers (Witz 2010: 3). Conceptualised as a "community museum", Lwandle residents found no inherent value in the existence of the museum and saw it as a tourist attraction for outsiders. They complained that the community's urgent needs, such as housing and unemployment, remained unaddressed while money was spent on this project (Witz 2010: 3). Furthermore, a gendered conflict erupted over the framing of the former hostel as a *male* migrant hostel when many women had made this hostel home in the face of severe state repression (Witz 2010: 10).

The Red Location Museum of the Struggle is situated in New Brighton, an area once famed as a "hotbed" of apartheid resistance with strong "struggle credentials". When the local community planned to commemorate this past, they envisioned that their museum would uplift local community members (Masters & Welman 2015: 87). The mayor offered the citizens of New Brighton a "bargain"; "1500 houses instead of a Museum. The citizens chose the Museum despite the fact that a large number of them continued in desperate living conditions" (Masters & Welman, 2015:89). The museum project would cost R30 million (Masters & Welman 2015: 87, 89). The Red Location museum opened in 2006 but was forced to close in October 2013 due to community protests, attacks on visitors and also because the museum building was stripped of its building materials as locals used it in the construction of surrounding shacks (Masters & Welman 2015: 89). Masters and Welman (2015) argued that the Red Location Museum failed because it was a well-built and serviced building in a local context where basic housing, hygiene and water were lacking. The museum did not uplift community members to the degree that they had initially expected.

It is in this context of heightened awareness about the colonial and apartheid legacies of museum practices and changed relationships with "source communities" as new avenues for political redress that Mr. Gerhard and Mr. Petrus tried to secure the Aranya Museum's Modjadji collection. Both described the collection as culturally significant to the source community but the *Gerhard Schneider Trust* did not allow for any reparations to be made to Queen Modjadji IV's descendants or community. Mr. Petrus insisted that he would reject any claims made on the collection, even on its lesser holdings (see Chapter 3).

The Aranya Museum from source community members' perspective

I conducted interviews with members of the Modjadji family, Mrs. Salomie and Mr. Jacob, and Mr. Musa, cousin to the Modjadji family and the official Modjadji tourism operator. During my conversations with them, I was surprised when they appreciated Mr. Gerhard's dedication to "preserving" Queen Modjadji IV's artefacts in the museum but found fault in his singular focus on queenly artefacts in his display. Source community members were critical of Mr. Gerhard's limited display of the queen's artefacts considering the number of Tsonga and Sotho artefacts on display in relation to artefacts of the Balobedu.

Mr. Musa visited the Aranya Museum in 2015. Recalling his tour of the museum, he said that he was pleased to see Queen Modjadji IV's artefacts that were no longer in use in his own home or the Modjadji royal compound. He expressed great appreciation for the work Mr. Gerhard did in the museum because he wanted aspects of his "traditional culture" that he said were disappearing, to be displayed in the museum. Thinking of the museum's work in preserving such cultural utensils, and the possibility that children could be educated about this in the museum, Mr. Musa said, "I am touched".

Mr. Musa and I were sitting in one of the offices at the Modjadji tribal authority on Monday, 18 March 2019. Given Mr. Musa's emphasis on the physical places of ceremonies and rituals, the unseen rainmaking objects and also objects such as the drums and pots that featured in the tour, about twenty to thirty minutes into the interview, I asked him what he knew about the Modjadji artefacts in the Aranya museum. He said that he was a bit hazy on the details of the artefacts held in the museum. I whipped out a few photographs I had taken on my camera and told him what Miss Cynthia and Miss Triphinia said about the artefacts during their guided tours in the museum. As we went through the photographs, Mr. Musa confirmed that the cooking pot (see Figure 11) and plate (see Figure 12) that Queen Modjadji IV ate from was indeed used for cooking and serving the queen's meals. Yet, he was surprised when he saw the photograph of the third pot (see Figure 13), which Miss Cynthia and Miss Triphinia said was a ritual pot the queen used during rainmaking ceremonies. Puzzled, Mr. Musa looked at the photograph again and said, "It is a plain old pot!" He insisted that the type of pot I showed him was not used in rituals "whatsoever", but might have been part of the cooking utensils for preparing side dishes in the royal house. Indeed, Mr. Musa explained, the queen only used a calabash during rainmaking rituals. Plus, he added, the calabash "from which she throws the

[sacred] mixture is bigger and carved differently" to the smaller pot I showed him in the photograph.

Figure 11: Modjadji cooking pot. Source: L Hendricks, date: 04/12/2018

Figure 12: Modjadji plate. Source: L Hendricks, date: 04/12/2018

Figure 13: Modjadji "ritual" pot. Source: L Hendricks, date: 04/12/2018

As we flipped through the remaining photographs, Mr. Musa stopped at another set, this time of the tall wooden poles that Miss Cynthia and Miss Triphinia said surrounded the royal courtyard. He confirmed that they indeed lined the royal *kraal* (corral). He also affirmed that the photographs of the previous Modjadji queens were indeed of the individuals identified on the framed print-out sheet of Modjadji queens next to the photographs. I then showed him the last picture, which Miss Cynthia and Miss Triphinia said was "the house guard of the rain queen" (see Figure 7) which protected "them from evil spirits because back then they had some beliefs that people had bad spirits, evil spirits". With a confused expression, Mr. Musa asked "The house guard?" He looked at the photograph again and shook his head. This was not an object of the Modjadji court or its rituals but instead suggested that it could be a serving bowl used for serving side dishes.

Mr. Musa said that the rain queens inherited their rainmaking paraphernalia and other household items and utensils from previous queens. I then asked him if he knew why Queen Modjadji IV gave such objects to Mr. Gerhard knowing that they were to be given to the following queen. Mr. Musa did not have an exact response but did say that the queen "had the responsibility to look after" inherited items for succeeding queens, yet when Queen Modjadji V took over leadership, new plates and bowls, and other items, were made for her to replace those which Queen Modjadji IV gave to Mr. Gerhard.

In speaking about Mr. Gerhard's Modjadji display, Mr. Musa said he would have preferred the museum to display more artefacts of the Balobedu *people* rather than limit

themselves to displaying only the queen's artefacts. He believed that the reason the museum displayed so little Modjadji artefacts was because Mr. Gerhard only approached the Queen for artefacts, not the Balobedu people "here", in Modjadjiskloof. Mr. Musa said that Mr. Gerhard could have included objects and utensils that Balobedu people used in their daily lives, as well as artefacts that could be traced through their history. He said that Mr. Gerhard could also have used objects to illuminate the labour and leisure processes of Balobedu routine activities.

A few days later, I interviewed Mrs. Salomie and Mr. Jacob, both closely related to the Queen. Unlike Mr. Musa, they said that they had no particular interest in visiting the Aranya Museum even though the museum featured artefacts from the royal family and things from "the Tsonga, the Sotho and us, the Balobedu". However, Mr. Jacob and Mrs. Salomie said that they were "happy" that the museum included the Modjadji artefacts as part of the displayed "cultures" in the area. Being in the museum recognised their "culture", something that locals as well as foreigners could see.

As I did with Mr. Musa, I showed Mr. Jacob and Mrs. Salomie pictures of the queen's artefacts in the museum and asked what they thought of the display. Mrs. Salomie and Mr. Jacob admitted that they did not know which of the Queen's belongings were given to Mr. Gerhard and displayed in the museum nor the conditions under which the artefacts were transferred. They at first seemed indifferent to the question but later admitted that they knew of the Queen's artefacts in the museum. They were not particularly interested in the pictures of the queen's old belongings on my camera and simply nodded as I flipped through them.

Mrs. Salomie, like Mr. Musa, wanted to see more common Balobedu artefacts in the Aranya Museum. Mrs. Salomie said displaying artefacts of the Balobedu people alongside Queen Modjadji IV's artefacts would ensure that their everyday culture "will not disappear or vanish". Mrs. Salomie then criticised the Modjadji tribal authority saying, "maybe those who are in charge can encourage [people from the community]" to make objects for the museum. She knew people living in Modjadjiskloof who could make clay pots, people adept in woodwork who could make sculptures and people trained in stringing traditional beadwork to make traditional dresses and bead work. Mrs. Salomie believed that the Modjadji tribal authority should gather these people, encourage them to make objects and send them to be added to the Modjadji collection in the Aranya Museum.

Yet despite their criticisms of the museum's current collection and displays, they had no interest in engaging with the Aranya Museum and its employees with regards to knowledge

production and the display of the Modjadji artefacts. Neither did they want to make claims on the Queen Modjadji IV artefacts currently in the museum. Considering the cultural significance of the queen's artefacts, the Balobedu's "central figure" (Krige & Krige 1943: xii), I found this rather surprising. But, already in 1943, Krige and Krige argued that neither the queen nor the Balobedu attached any "special prestige… to possessions" (1943: 286). Yet "great care" was dedicated to preserving the queen's rainmaking medicines and paraphernalia as this affected the efficacy of her rituals (Krige & Krige 1943:273). According to Krige and Krige, the queen's rain medicines were kept in rough unearthed pots, rain-horns in a hut of the royal village, and drums and rain-pot were also kept hidden and hardly ever seen by villagers (1943: 273-4). The exact nature of the queen's rainmaking objects, charms and medicines were "enshrouded in the greatest secrecy" to which few of the villagers, royal or non-royal, ever had access to. These secrets were imparted exclusively to the succeeding queen prior to the death of the reigning queen as this knowledge was bound up with the title and power to succeed to the throne (Krige & Krige 1943: 273). Mr. Musa also touched on the secrecy of the queen's rainmaking objects and charms by indicating, from a distance, where in the royal compound they were stored.

In speaking of objects which related directly to their royalty, Mr. Musa said that his existing tours of the royal compound would not be enriched with the inclusion of the old Queen's artefacts while Mrs. Salomie said that there was no reason to claim Queen Modjadji IV's artefacts from the museum. She said that the artefacts in the Aranya Museum should remain there and that an independent museum, with new things, should be erected at the royal compound to attract tourists.

Mrs. Salomie was rather critical of Mr. Musa's tours of the Modjadji royal compound saying that he lacked professionalism and that the organisation of the tours were very bad. When she heard of my experience with *Q&M Tours*, she said in an agitated tone, "You will not come back again!" Additionally, she felt that the tour did not expose visitors to "the Balobedu people", their "community" and daily lives in Modjadjiskloof. Mrs. Salomie insisted that the Modjadji tours did not offer visitors much, "there is nothing" besides showing visitors the royal compound and kraal. And in the royal compound, she complained, Mr. Musa only showed visitors two empty *rondavels,* and a few drums and beer brewing pots that were only used during the rainmaking and other important ceremonies. He did not have other objects that he could show tourists, she said. Even at the Modjadji Cycad Nature Reserve, visitors "only see trees!" she exclaimed. But, Mrs. Salomie said, "you won't get anything, it must be developed".

Mrs. Salomie then suggested that Mr. Musa use one of the empty *rondavels* and convert it into a local museum that showcased Balobedu objects like cooking utensils, traditional outfits made by people in Modjadjiskloof and photographs of traditional dancers, their previous queens and important events like the rainmaking ceremony. She also suggested incorporating live performances into the tours. Mrs. Salomie would have liked to organise a group of traditional dancers to perform for visitors, and men and women positioned throughout the kraal and the royal village making traditional beadwork and drums when visitors were scheduled to arrive. Visitors could then watch locals make traditional utensils, dresses and other objects and spend money on buying things from the locals. If dancers, or those making beadwork, pots and drums were unavailable, Mrs. Salomie suggested that Mr. Musa take advantage of "twenty-first century" media technologies, such as videos and photographs, to make visual presentations of the activities for curious tourists.

Mrs. Salomie strongly felt that incorporating "the community" into the Modjadji tours would significantly improve its current state and make it "something interesting". It would "generate tourism and money in the *kraal* and in the palace". When Mrs. Salomie had offered her services as an artist to Mr. Musa, he discourteously rebuffed her. She exclaimed,

> They push you far, they don't want you around. It is sad because we must build this place together but they [tourism operators] don't want us, they separate us so they can do whatever they want to do. We are capable but we cannot do [anything] or help. It is sad because this is our culture and we must keep things in order for visitors.

In many respects, Mrs. Salomie's views accorded with Ivanovic (2015)'s study of local tourism development in three royal Modjadji villages. Community members in this study opined that tourism activities did not concern nor include them and that tourism was the preserve of the Modjadji Tribal Authority (Ivanovic 2015: 47). They were unsure why tourists visited the village and did not know what kind of tourism activities existed in their village (Ivanovic 2015: 46). Those involved in tourism activities, agreed that tourism in their village generated an income they would not have received otherwise and that they did not have to travel far distances to get to work but that jobs in the sector were informal and temporary (Ivanovic 2015: 48). The majority claimed that the royal family, and not the community, benefitted from tourism activities to their area. As such, income generated via tourism was used to pay the salaries of tourism employees, to maintain and improve infrastructure at the royal village, while anything left over went to the royal family responsible for tourism development (Ivanovic 2015: 48). Ivanovic (2015: 49) concluded that, although there were members of the

community who performed and played music for tourist donations, tourism at the Modjadji royal village was neither "sustainable" nor "community-based".

The fact that Mr. Musa and Mrs. Salomie did not want to claim or use the Modjadji collection in the museum, coupled with their idea to incorporate artefacts from local community members, and Mrs. Salomie's suggestion that the community members incorporate themselves into the Modjadji tours, underscored the multiplicity of their critique of the Aranya Museum. It was not only a critique of Mr. Gerhard's representation of the Balobedu "culture" but also a response to his singular focus on collecting only artefacts of their Modjadji royalty. Yet, Mr. Musa and Mrs. Salomie's desire to include local community members into the Modjadji tours that focused solely on the Modjadji queens also came at a time of heightening internal political strife between two of the six royal Balobedu families: the Modjadji and Mokoto families. The royal feud was discussed in 2019 in an article in the *Noseweek*.

A royal feud

At the time of my research, Prince Mpapatla Modjadji was the Regent of the Balobedu people. As part of the Modjadji tribal authority, the prince was supported by the royal and traditional council, which Mr. Musa called the "council of elders". The prince assumed the role of regent after the untimely death of his sister, Queen Makobo Modjadji VI, in 2005 (Anon 2008). He would be regent until Modjadji VI's daughter, Masalanabo Modjadji, became of age. This was in accordance with customary laws that ensured only queens who were of age ruled (Krige & Krige 1943: 273).

According to Matlala (2010), the feud between the Modjadji and the Mokoto royal family started in 2008 when the Mokoto family withdrew from the annual rainmaking ceremony where the remaining five families, the Mathekgas, Masophas, Morwatshehlas, Matshwis and the Mampeules gathered to perform the annual rituals. The Mokoto royal family conducted a separate ritual ceremony of their own (Matlala 2010; Matlala 2015). A spokesperson of the Mokoto royal family, which was closely related to the ruling Modjadji family, Reuphus Mokoto, said that the Modjadji family "snatched" the dynasty from the Mokoto family in the early 1800s. Krige and Krige (1943: 8-9) made no mention of this event when speaking of the succession of the Modjadji throne from a cycle of kings to the cycle of queens which began in the 1880s. Rain Queen Modjadji II ascended to the throne as the child of an incest relationship between Mugodo, the last king, and his daughter, Mujaji, considered

the first Modjadji queen (Krige & Krige 1943: 9). Mokoto said that his father had been the "paramount chief" of the Balobedu clan from 1955 to 1960 when he died in a fatal car accident. After his death, the Modjadji family crowned a female ruler, Makoma Modjadji IV, as regent because Mokoto was too young to assume the throne when his father passed away (Matlala 2015). Mokoto said that the contention over the throne reignited when the Modjadji family "brushed us aside to crown one of their own, Mokope in 1981" as Modjadji V and again in 2001 when "the Modjadjis avoided us like a disease and crowned Makobo as Modjadji VI". Customarily successors were chosen and elected in secret by reigning queens and their "inner circle", only a small circle of close relatives knew the identity of the successor until it was publicly announced upon the death of her predecessor (Krige & Krige 1943: 10-11, 167). Mokoto predicted that there would be no rain in Limpopo as long as the Modjadji royal family wrongfully occupied the throne (Matlala 2018).

In 2010, Cyril Mokoto said that the Modjadji family were unable to bring rain because they did not use the "powerful horn to speak to the ancestors to bring rain to the drought-prone province" of Limpopo (Matlala 2010). This horn, which "magically [brought] rain" was at the centre of the dispute but was locked up in a "sacred holy place" 10 km from Khethakone where the five closely-related royal families gathered annually to appease their ancestors with the ritual rain ceremony (Matlala 2010; Matlala 2015). Cyril Mokoto said, "it is only we, the Mokotos, who have access to the holy place because we have been given the powers to speak to the ancestors… The regent can only enter the place after getting permission from us". The attention placed on this rain horn countered Krige and Krige's (1943: 286) that the Balobedu had no special attachment to possessions, and instead suggested that this was an ideal of past generations no longer valued.

In 2015, the Chairperson of the Modjadji royal council and spokesperson of the Modjadji royal family, John Malatji, countered Cyril's claims by saying that the shrines and bones were being taken care of by "the other Mokotos – not related" (Matlala 2010; Matlala 2015). The dispute continued in 2018 when the new Modjadji spokesperson, Phetole Mampeule, publically proclaimed, "If the claims by the Mokotos were genuine, why don't they convince the relevant bodies which deal with claims and counter-claims on traditional leadership and status?" (Matlala 2018). He insisted that the Mokoto royal family had "gotten the wrong end of the stick", were frustrated and bitter because of their failure to take over the throne and dismissed their claims as baseless (Anon 2018a; Matlala 2018). Mampeule said the

Modjadji family did "not need the permission of the Mokotos to perform their rituals" (Matala 2010).

In 2018, President Cyril Ramaphosa found himself at the centre of this royal feud when he and former president Jacob Zuma attended a ceremony celebrating the official restoration of the Balobedu queenship. Ramaphosa's announcement, that Masalanabo Modjadji, then thirteen years old, was to be crowned as the new rain queen, widened the rift between the two families (Anon 2018; Matlala 2018). At the function, a senior member of the Mokoto family called the Modjadji family "thieves" and accused Ramaphosa of "playing with fire". The Mokoto family member said, "They will not crown the child because she is not the rightful heir to the throne… The Mokotos will fight until the last drop of our blood to ensure the dynasty comes back to its rightful owners" (Anon 2018a). In response to these accusations, Mampeule said "The Mokotos' claims are baffling" (Anon 2018a). The Mokoto family's claim to the throne was finally put before Limpopo premier, Stan Mathabatha. He suggested that the Mokoto family should "approach the Tolo Commission and the department of cooperative governance, housing and traditional affairs, which deals with traditional leadership disputes" (Anon 2018a).

Elsewhere in Australia, Canada and the United States, Peers and Brown (2003: 19) celebrated independent community museums as an attempt on behalf of source community members to actively pursue goals of self-identification and to legitimise their culture within a broader setting where it was "silenced, marginalised and appropriated" (cf. Peers & Brown 2003:84). Given the history of apartheid dispossession, and the treatment of the Modjadji queen as a regular traditional leader, rather than as a queen following her appointment as "chieftainess" in 1927 (Motshekga 2010: 177), this could certainly be one explanation for the family's support of a community museum. But the timing of this nascent museum, and its support by a faction of the Balobedu community, also pointed to a more assertive and recognisably political project, one in which the Modjadji royal family stood to benefit politically from the legitimisation that an ethnic museum would lend them.

My fieldwork coincided with heightened tensions between the Modjadji and the Mokoto royal families. Mrs. Salomie, Mr. Jacob and Mr. Musa were all part of the Modjadji family and vocally supported Masalanabo Modjadji elect as the rightful heir to the Balobedu queenship. It was also in the context of this political dispute that Mr. Musa wanted to incorporate artefacts made by local "community members" into his Modjadji tours while Mrs.

Salomie suggested the creation of a "community museum" that would display objects made and collected from Modjadjiskloof residents. Yet neither Mr. Musa nor Mrs. Salomie mentioned this political feud or the rainmaking horn that became central in the dispute between the two families. Their emphasis on the inclusion of local community members into a form of ethnic tourism that celebrated and authenticated the claims to the throne of one section, mirrored efforts elsewhere, for instance in Ghana (see Beidelman 1997: 8), where traditional authorities constructed collective community museums to enhance the dignity and image of said authorities.

Aside from the fact that cultural tourism was a potential source of external revenue, Smith and Robinson (2005: 2) stated that tourism was a marker of political status that stems from cultural capital and therefore a means to legitimate some groups as territorial and concrete entities. In light of such a publicised dispute over who between the Mokoto and Modjadji family had the right to hold the Balobedu queenship, the incorporation of local residents of Modjadjiskloof into tourism, either by using objects of their making, or by constructing a local museums of their artefacts and requesting their active participation in the royal compound, may in fact solidify their legitimacy of their rule over the Balobedu people.

A community museum endorsed by the Modjadji family would potentially solidify their claim as the rightful holders of the scared rainmaking objects (excluding the sacred horn to which the Mokoto family had a customary claim) and the royal drums used by the Modjadji queens during rainmaking ceremonies, yet only if it was supported by community members evident in visible participation and investment into the museum on their part.

Museums, tourism and political authority

The authority of traditional leaders in South Africa have long been questioned, at many times due to their compliance with the apartheid government (Oomen & Kessel, 1997: 563-4). Fokwang (2003: 40- 43) described one such dispute that happened in the early 1990s within the Venda kingdom. Here, two factions of the royal council, led by the leaders of the Tshivhase and Mphephu dynasties, vied for the Venda throne and the legitimate right to rule. After a heated political battle, the Tshivhase dynasty eventually assumed power. Beidelman (1997: 7) argued that governments and tribal authorities in Africa have long since claimed the moral right over cultural identity and iconic property as part of a broader campaign to consolidate a "shaky legitimacy" questioned within and external to their borders. The early 2000s saw many

traditional leaders in South Africa, and abroad, form ethnic corporations that branded and reproduced ethnicity, which Van Wyk (2003: 16) perceived as an attempt to reformulate and assert their chieftaincies in light of increasing resistance to their influence.

In 2009, Comaroff and Comaroff (2009: 15) argued that ethnic groups in South Africa were increasingly commodifying cultural identity and remaking themselves along the lines of a corporation as a means to profit off their traditions, customs and products. This was done in a context where such groups had no or limited capital and resources. Turning their ethnicity into capital allowed such groups, and the authorities that presented them, with access to markets, money and material enrichment (Comaroff & Comaroff 2009: 15). They posited that the commodification of ethnic identities was in most cases dependent on identifying something essentially unique to a given culture, which they then capitalised on and sold. From the 1980s, an increasing amount of cultural villages sprung up as a means to market "vernacular lifeways" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009: 11). Shakaland was an elaborate "prototype" of such a cultural village, an ethno-theme park and resort based on the Zulu identity and the "Zulu way of doing things" (Witz et al 2010: 279).

In his tours, Mr. Musa promoted the uniqueness of the Modjadji rain queens as South Africa's only female traditional authority. The website, *Tours Africa* which marketed the tours, promoted the Modjadji rain queen as an attribute exclusive to the Balobedu culture (Anon 2018e). Comaroff and Comaroff (2009: 12) argued that this kind of "ethnic incorporation" involved a "process of homogenisation and abstraction… for all their internal divisions, became one; their "lifeways" [are] withdrawn from time or history". Mr. Musa centred his tours solely on life in the Modjadji royal village, it did not include information or descriptions of the lives of Balobedu people in Modjadjiskloof, aside from their presence at the annual rainmaking ceremony. Mr. Musa's tours essentialised (and reduced) the everyday culture of Balobedu people into the newly unveiled mysteries of the Modjadji rain queens and in doing so branded the cultural identity of the Balobedu people with the history of the royal family and the heritage of Modjadji rain queens (cf. Comaroff & Comaroff 2009: 15).

The Modjadji royal family wanted to take advantage of this "identity economy" that formed part of South Africa's burgeoning cultural and rural tourism industry (Ivanovic 2015: 45). Yet cultural tourism was "not very popular in the province (Anon 2004), and with only Mr. Musa conducting tours and no recurring stream of tourists into the royal village, tourists only visited the Modjadji Cycad Reserve (Ivanovic 2015: 46). The monopolisation of the

Modjadji rain queen identity was evidently seen in their ownership of the Modjadji Nature Reserve Lodge and part of the African Ivory Route. The African Ivory Route, a project that was described as "without a doubt a success" (Anon 2004), was significantly more popular with a much larger web-presence than the Modjadji Cycad Reserve. During my visit, the reserve had no other visitors and the little shop for day visitors was closed while the locked display room only exhibited a handful of items. The Modjadji family were the sole financial benefactors of tourism activities in the area inspired by or involving the "Modjadji brand" (Ivanovic 2015: 45). Mr. Musa's tours were part of the Modjadji family's wider strategy to further commercialise the Modjadji dynasty. It took on an object-like form to be conceived, communicated and consumed by local people and tourists alike (Comaroff & Comaroff 2009: 12). Yet, with the lack of infrastructure and a recurring flow of tourists, it was not, at the time of research, a fully realised ethnicity project that Comaroff and Comaroff (2009) spoke of.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined two source community members' opinion of the Aranya Museum. The value they saw in Mr. Gerhard's Modjadji collection differed from Mr. Gerhard and Mr. Petrus who viewed the artefacts as assets in need of protection, and also from Mr. Daniel who viewed the artefacts as productions of the area's "magical" black communities. Their lack of interest in the museum's Modjadji artefacts, and in particular in Mr. Musa's case, his contradicting descriptions of several of the artefacts challenged the authenticity of the Modjadji artefacts and also the legitimacy of the Aranya Museum. They viewed the museum very differently in comparison to actors such as Mr. Petrus and Mr. Daniel. Their interest in objects specifically made by local community members and their desire for community members' active participation in a community museum and tourism, was based on their perception of what a museum is yet also part of a political ploy in the dispute over the Modjadji family's right to rule. In creating a community museum of local artefacts, they also defined another layer of the 'right' type of objects that could, and should be exhibited in a museum.

Interestingly, both Mrs. Salomie and Mr. Musa's insisted that empty buildings and descriptions of traditions and rituals were not enough to attract tourists who wanted to see objects and visual displays. They imagined tourists would want to see the kind of tourism development that they had seen endlessly repeated throughout the area; of stalls chock-full of crafts, of people entertaining tourists with dances and performances, of filling empty spaces

with people to make it more sociable. They were aware of local tourism trends and knew that an attraction defined by an empty sacred space may not be sufficient for tourists looking for something different. The idea of a community museum at the royal compound also subscribed to the notion that the community needed to be involved, either as a result of the constant petitioning for it amongst tourism and museum staff and scholars, or as a counter-measure to the very publicised nature in which the Mokoto family questioned their legitimate right to rule over the Balobedu people. In this they continued to focus on objects that centred on the Balobedu's unique ethnic characteristic: the Modjadji rain queen and her ability to transform the clouds, to bring or withhold the rain.

Despite this interest and need for more objects at the royal kraal, and specifically objects that would legitimatise the royal family, Mr. Musa and Mrs. Salomie rejected the idea of making a claim on the Aranya museum's Modjadji artefacts. They declared that these artefacts were of no practical use to them and should therefore remain in the museum. Instead, they were interested in creating new artefacts created by local community members. This was a political project that would have reasserted their ethnic identity on a communal and individual scale. The motivation that spurred their interest was also different to that which was seen from others connected to the museums and its artefacts. Their motivations was entirely different: Mr. Gerhard's interest was driven by his passion for collecting Africa artefacts, Mr. Petrus was motivated by the prescriptions of the Trust to the protection of the museum's "assets", Miss Cynthia's interest stemmed from her desire to protect Mr. Gerhard legacy she perceived to be embedded in the artefacts, Miss Triphinia was motivated by her desire for professional progression in the museum, and lastly Mr. Daniel interest in the museum was motivated by his desire to elevate and build up his family farm through the formation of a satellite museum (see Chapter 2-4).

Their desire to construct a community museum can be read as a strategic political move that would create a sense of community and belonging that was absent from the royal compound- and threatened by the split between the two warring factions. Considering the unsettling dispute over the Modjadji throne, and the Mokoto family's insistence on their right to rule, in this chapter I show how internal political struggles animated the desire for, and movement of objects and the making of museums. A community museum would have created a space, quite deliberately in the royal compound, where regular Balobedu subjects could gather while simultaneously acting as a symbolic centre that would lend credence to their legitimacy as rulers of the Balobedu people, as holders of their artefacts.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

From the late 1980s, scholars in South Africa have noted a surprising rise in the popularity of ethnic identity politics by the very people whose lives had been defined and prescribed by the apartheid government's ethnic and racial politics (Oomen 2005: 106; Van Wyk 2003: 1). The enforcement of internal ethnic divisions among black people was implemented by the apartheid state to forestall the possibility that they may unite toward a liberation struggle. According to the literature, it was widely expected that culture and ethnicity would disappear in a democratic South Africa because these were inventions of the colonial state and apartheid government that were used as tools of governance rather than an acknowledgement of real difference between people (Cook 2013: 227; Hamilton 1998:3; Oomen 2005: 165). In a post-apartheid context, the restoration and assertion of ethnic and group identities have formed the basis of land claims lodged during the land reform program (Witz et al 2001: 281) while the re-assertion of traditional leadership rested centrally on claims to unchanging ethnicity (Leatt 2017: 132). In many of these cases, successful land claimants and traditional authorities resorted to launching various forms of cultural tourism, game reserves and other ethnic corporations as a means to reconstitute communities on restored land (Witz et al 2001:281). This was evident when looking at ethno-businesses such as the Mabaso Game Reserve (Van Wyk 2003: 12), Shakaland, and the platinum mines of the Royal Bafokeng Nation (Comaroff & Comaroff 2009: 11, 98; Cook 2013: 63). The benefits of being Bafokeng have, to date, been communal with a focus on service delivery and infrastructure, while other ethnic corporations reaped the financial benefits of tourism in terms of job-creation and money-generation in their communities (Cook 2013: 64; Van Wyk 2003:12). In these cases, previously marginalised, dispossessed and poor groups with restricted access to other resources and forms of capital, turned their ethnicity into an "ethnic brand" (Comaroff & Comaroff 2009:108), a process that required them to focus on that which made them unique and recognisably different from other ethnic groups (Comaroff & Comaroff 2009: 15, 24, 52).

It was in this context of retribalisation and heightened ethnic distinction that the Balobedu of Limpopo seemed to have a distinct ethnic identity that held enormous potential for the development of a form of "Ethnicity Inc." (Comaroff & Comaroff 2009); their traditional leadership were female and were widely held to have mystical rain-making abilities (see Chapter 1). The Modjadji queenship had also, through a confluence of various political and social factors, become fascinating to a wider South African public.

I would have loved to study the rising popularity of the Modjadji queenship and the connections to her rainmaking abilities in more detail but due to a confluence of factors, not least of them the untimely and unexpected death of three key people relatively central to my original research theme, limited timing, a lack of money and various forms of bad luck during my research, my study transformed to focus on a small ethnology museum that housed some of the Modjadji queen's artefacts. This research project then revolved around this museum which also exhibited, alongside the Modjadji artefacts, artefacts collected from surrounding black communities, and black communities from further afield in Central Africa. The museum framed and displayed the artefacts as representative of black "cultures" and heritage but set the Modjadji collection apart as its star attraction.

In this museum, the value of the Modjadji collection, as well as the narratives that accompanied those artefacts, were determined by Mr. Gerhard, the museum's original owner and curator. Mr. Gerhard's collecting practice and the narratives he wrote about his ethnology museum and its African artefacts were informed by a colonial mentality that framed the "source community" as 'undeveloped' and in need of his cultural expertise. In this narrative, Mr. Gerhard pictured himself as a cultural protector of black cultures being lost to modernisation and change. His patronising and outmoded view of museum curation also influenced his relationship to the museum staff. Mr. Gerhard's patriarchal treatment of Miss Cynthia was evidently noted in his long-winded teaching techniques, and at times, his role as her benefactor. On almost all counts, this small museum exhibited a view of culture and a relationship to local black people that were out of step with post-apartheid South African sensibilities that rejected the patronising views and violent practices of colonial collectors (see Chapter 3). This was clearly reflected in the municipal neglect of the museum and the falling number of visitors who frequented the museum.

With Mr. Gerhard's death, something very surprising happened to the ethnology museum; instead of closing, a number of powerful people in the town started to show an interest in not only keeping the museum open, but also in expanding and renewing its collection. This once-neglected and unfashionable museum, and especially its Modjadji collection was suddenly 'set in motion' by interests that originated from the political, economic and social forces at work in the little town. In a context of great racial tensions over local land claims, Mr. Gerhard's collection suddenly presented interested parties with a store of cultural capital that they could bring to bear on their problems with local labour, with attempts to counteract

accusations that they did not belong to a local area and to imaginations of their future individual career paths.

Literature on South African museums and collecting speak mainly of colonialism, collections and collecting practices as if it is a single phenomenon or homogenous practice, yet my ethnography showed that in the Aryana Museum, collections do not exist in the singular; they are, like colonialism itself, heterogeneous (Comaroff 1993: 192). Collections can also be informed by the people that work with them and as they relate to it and to one another. In relation to the collection's relationship to other people, Mr. Gerhard's collection was very different from the collection that Agri24 wanted to make and instrumentalise, which was also very different from the way in which Mr. Daniel wanted to use it, and again different from the way in which the Balobedu people wanted to moblise the collection.

Unlike Mr. Gerhard, who claimed to have a moral interest and investment in the education and cultural enrichment of the town's youth, Mr. Petrus did not express this virtue as strongly in discussing the future of the museum and its collection. On the contrary, Mr. Petrus' appropriation of Mr. Gerhard's collection, by virtue of the Trust, underpinned a grab at the cultural capital embedded in the museum and the artefacts it held, more specifically cultural capital that would allow rich and landed local elites to overcome, or at least counter, accusations that they were disinterested in black people's lives, their values and their culture. In capturing a collection of artefacts, sourced from local black communities, actors such as Mr. Petrus could temper the critique levelled against them, especially since Agri24 was accused of flattening ancestral graves and similar accusation of indifference toward worker and labour disputes. Mr. Petrus' (and Agric24's) appropriation of Mr. Gerhard's collection, and the manner in which he approached it as an inseparable part of an ethnology museum also said something about what he aimed to accomplish with the collection. On the one hand, the prestige of being associated with an ethnology museum and collection, and the cultural capital gained from an association with artefacts sourced from local black communities, could only have benefited Mr. Petrus and Agri24's public image. On the other hand, Mr. Petrus's approach to the museum, and in particular his position on the possibility of reparation of museum artefacts also spoke to the stance he had taken in Agri24, and Agri24's stance towards worker disputes and land claims. With Agri24 faced with land claim disputes and an existential threat to their continued existence as an agricultural business, Mr. Petrus' appropriation of the Aranya Museum was an attempt to get Agri24 employees, and in general the town's black communities, 'on their side'. His position on museum reparations also reflected Agri24's

position regarding land claim and their reluctance to return land to people who have lodge claims on Agri24 property. Under the purview of Mr. Petrus, the Aranya Museum took on Argi24's stance towards land claims in dealing with the issue of museum reparations and source community engagement.

Yet, Agric24 was not the only local interested group who saw the value of Mr. Gerhard's collection. Mr. Daniel, who was another wealthy, landed local elite was also interested in this ethnic museum but for reasons that were quite different to Mr. Petrus and his Agric24 conglomerate. Mr Daniel's positionality within the town meant that he, and his family, were also situated in a local context of land claim disputes and local worker and wages disputes. Yet Mr. Daniels's interest in Mr. Gerhard's collection was wholly different. In capturing Mr. Gerhard's collection of African artefacts, Mr. Daniel intended to show that he and his family were unlike their white (racist) counterparts in the town and that the family's long history in the area preceded the current black-white tensions over land. Appropriating a collection of ethnic artefacts, on historically white-owned land, would have gone a long way to circumvent the accusation that he and his family did not belong in the area. As such, Mr. Daniel, unlike Mr. Petrus, based his appropriation of the artefacts on his family's supposed long kinship with local black communities. Instead of resisting possible claims by the museum's source communities on its collections, Mr. Daniel promised that his exhibition and curation of the collection would lead to more open and democratic forms of interpretation of the artefacts. These claims of kinship and belonging were however more precarious than I was led to believe, which also influenced the manner in which he wanted to "capture" the collection. Mr. Daniel wanted to house the collection on his family land, where it would do the symbolic work of proving his family's long kinship with local people and the land. This would not only symbolically distinguish the family from other white families but would also lend it the cultural distinction of having a museum on their estate, which would set them on par with landed elites in other parts of the country. The purpose of his appropriation, Mr. Daniel explained, was also different to Mr. Petrus', which meant his plans for the future of the museum and Mr. Gerhard's collection were also different. He wanted to open the museum to the public, including the museum's source communities, with a participatory and educational focus.

What was interesting in both Mr. Daniel and Mr. Petrus's plans for the museum was that both expected that its "source community", who at a minimum would be the Balobedu people or the Modjadji royal family, would be interested in its future. The literature on post-colonial museums and source communities definitely support such a supposition as it is filled

with stories of source communities who either seek to gain control of exhibitions containing indigenous materials, or to liberate indigenous collections from an ingrained colonial lens and context of viewing, and in so doing, undo the assumptions of colonial authority (Peers & Brown 2003: 2, 45). Yet strangely enough, this source community was not very interested in 'their' indigenous artefacts displayed in the museum, nor in the narrative assigned to those artefacts. Apart from the museum workers who had in one case learnt Mr. Gerhard's narrative of each artefact off by heart as a prescribed way to correctly "do" museum work, few of the locals I spoke to showed any interest in making claims on the ethnology museum for a return of their artefacts. This was especially surprising given criticisms of the local Modjadji cultural tour, which emphasized that the current tour did not have much to show the tourists and that more "things" would interest foreigners visiting the rain queen's compound. This specific source community had no desire to claim the museum's Modjadji collection, and aside from their opinions of Mr. Gerhard's exhibition of the artefacts, they had no interest in the current and future plans for the museum or the Modjadji collection.

I found their disinterest in the workings of the Modjadji collection to be centrally informed by the political position of respective source community members, in relation to each other and their stake in cultural tourism at the Modjadji compound. Yet I also found their disinterest to be informed by the political position of the Modjadji traditional authority in a context of internal political disputes with the Mokoto family. The Balobedu tour guide and members of the royal family also differed from the interests of local white elites in terms of what they believed constituted cultural capital. For Modjadji family members and the Balobedu tour guide, cultural capital was not found in immobile objects placed in perpetuity in a stagnating museum. Their imagining of what a tourist would want revolved around present-day artefacts made by community members and the novel experience of a local presence in the royal kraal. Source community members understood a museum to be more of a dynamic construction involving active participation on the part of community members and visitors, yet also viewed cultural capital as being encompassed in people and their constructions, unlike the Modjadji collection in the Aranya Museum. Their perception of the museum informed their decision of the artefacts it held, artefacts which could not be mobilised properly to make a case for their cultural heritage and value. Thus, instead of a "source community" laying claim to their ethnic heritage to create a form of "Ethnicity Inc." (Comaroff & Comaroff 2009), it was local white, elite, businessmen who were wealthy and landed that were invested in the ethnology museum and the futures of its Modjadji collection.

In all three instances I found very different kinds of mobilisations, firstly in terms of what ethnicity is and secondly, in terms of how each participant mobilised the museum and the artefacts it contained to do cultural work. What was particularly interesting about this case as a whole was that it showed, if one were to look at ethnicity as defined by a collection such as the one held in this local museum, that the people who were trying to preserve ethnicity and keep it contained and preserved in the form of cultural capital were people whose interests were contrary to the people whose heritage it was. Their desire to acquire a collection and the cultural capital embedded in it was motivated by reasons having to do with their current political positionality and the desire to improve and settle political scores and attain cultural as well as symbolic capital, in a context where their symbolic capital was under threat due to the questioned legitimacy of white land owners, the sheer visibility of land claim disputes and the rise of neo-liberal ideas which are now at the forefront of political discourse.

In this thesis I have shown that it was not local black communities mobilising this ethnic museum and its artefacts but actually white wealthy and landed elites, who were in opposition to their interests and moving to appropriate the cultural capital they lost when Mr. Gerhard acquired artefacts from their communities. Comaroff and Comaroff (2009) and similar literature explored and investigated but one segment of people, the marginalised and poor who mobilise cultural capital only ever as an alternative to, and in the absence of real and tangible political and economic capital. Yet the mobilisation of cultural capital, as demonstrated in this thesis, is implicated in the ways in which the knowledge of politics and economics works for those with a surplus of the economic and political, and other forms of capital. In the local context of Aranya, the cultural capital embedded in the collection of African artefacts held at the museum was mobilised due to a changing political landscape which forced these elites into a position where they had to now justify why they own land and how they came to be politically and economically powerful. Contrary to the assertion in the literature that ethnicity is being reclaimed in a post-apartheid era by the marginalised and poor, my research on this local museum and its future showed that ethnicity and its cultural products were appropriated by people who were economically powerful, and this appropriation took place as the political landscape shifted to become more suspicious of them and their wealth whether based on economic, political or cultural capital.

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